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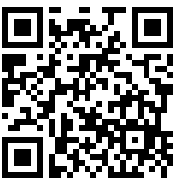

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MEMORIES
OF FOUR FRONTS

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LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM MARSHALL, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., K.C.S.I.

[*Frontispiece*

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MEMORIES OF FOUR FRONTS

BY LT.-GEN.

Sir William Marshall

G.C.M.G., K.C.B., K.C.S.I., C.B.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON

ERNEST BENN LIMITED

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INTRODUCTION

THE appearance of this book will flutter the Major-Generals. Since Moses drew liquid refreshment for the Elders of Israel from the rock in the desert of Horeb, Senior Officers have struck nothing so singular as an outbreak of ink from General Sir William Marshall. Marshall of all men! To think that in peace time he should have half-drawn his sword, letting the steely glint escape from its dull sheath into the ante-room of the Mess! The Regulation fine is, as we all know, a magnum of champagne. Being a veteran he will not get off so lightly. In fact, his ex-Commander-in-Chief sentences him hereby to the penalty of reading some thousands of words written mostly about himself, just in case this quiet man, who never retires from the enemy but only from his friends, should contrive to shrink back into his shell even in the very act of revealing himself.

There are soldiers who thrive upon peace. Paradoxical, but it is so. They would survive a Thirty Years' War and never a soul hear of them. The signing of peace is their zero hour and then—over the top they go! Gifted, like certain flowers, with the faculty of turning their faces to the sun, they are able to absorb twice as many of the ultra-violet rays of patronage as their more stiff-necked brethren. Instinct impels them to back the Chief of the Imperial General Staff; to black the boots—already over-polished—of the Adjutant-General to the Forces; to proclaim with drum and fife from housetops the wisdom

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shown by the Quarter-Master-General in his disposal of kitchen refuse—not forgetting in their spare moments to dig, water, log roll, leg pull and otherwise cultivate the back garden of the Secretary to the Selection Board. If only the blessed peace lasts long enough they are bound to command large bodies of troops whenever, like swarming bees, the next boy army pushes eagerly off into the unknown.

There are other soldiers whose attentions are reserved for the enemy; who confine their aspirations for advancement or decorations strictly to silent prayer; who simply carry on whatever peace duties may be assigned to them, confiding their reputations as fighters to the goodwill and remembrance of their military chiefs. They have done famous deeds, yet, far from wishing to figure at Madame Tussaud's, they prefer the restfulness of incognito. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," say the War Office. "That's the man for my money," says one politician to the other. "Yes," replies the other to the one, "give me the great silent service every time." Yet, sad to say, the longer the peace lasts the more unknown becomes the quiet warrior. After ten years he is seen and yet not seen, like the statue of the gallant Lord Strathnairn piaffing over the lavatories of Knightsbridge. From the moment peace is signed he is entering upon that parlous state of oblivion. If he wants to keep alive he's got to look alive. He must bestir himself. He should think out a job in the coming war, and try to make it so. He must see to it, for instance, that he is not cut out, year after year, from attending the manœuvres of those who are to be our next allies and of thus becoming known to their military and political chiefs. Under our British system they will make the plan of campaign so they will appoint or disappoint the

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Generals. All this is a pity, but so God has created mankind. Far from advancing during peace time the best fighting types slip back; so much so that, when a new war breaks out, they find themselves left behind to fix up the defences of London or Bombay. No one thinks of going back to the valuations made by Bobs or K. during the South African War. Since South African days a revised list has been plotted out. Lord K. himself has become an outsider; if he attempts to put in a Smith-Dorrien (the finest handler of infantry produced by South Africa and the fighter who cast a ray of glory across the darkest phase of 1914) read pages 38, 39, in the book "1914" and see what a hullabaloo!

During the South African War the career of Captain Marshall shot starwards like a meteor. He started as Commander of a company of Mounted Infantry, a post of humble seeming. Humble perhaps, but the best shot at post on the veldt. By dint of playing pitch and toss with every ounce of lead thus offered to him; by proving himself time after time to be a leader of energy, clearness of observation and resource, Captain Marshall was awarded the rare distinction of a double Brevet. A fine reward, but could they have given him less when, by his cool yet desperate valour, he, and he alone, had saved a whole column from destruction? He would no doubt have got the Victoria Cross as well; also, afterwards, another Victoria Cross at the Dardanelles; only, being each time the senior on the spot, there never was anyone to recommend him. However, by the end of the South African War, Marshall had become a Lieutenant-Colonel holding a big lead over his contemporaries. True, it was only brevet rank, but brevet was the bomb with which Wolseley, always a bit of a Bolshevist, intended to blow up the castle inhabited by H.R.H. the Duke of

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Cambridge. The name of that castle was Seniority First, and it was garrisoned by bow-and-arrow Generals. A double brevet especially had been planned to provide the British Army with leaders in the next war; leaders who should not only have stood the shot and shown joy of battle but *would be young*! Even in the hour of defeat, however, the obscurantists managed to insert a proviso that the breveted Lieutenant-Colonel must be proved by employment suitable to his new rank before, under the terms of the Royal Warrant, he could obtain further promotion to the vital rank, a full Colonelcy in the Army. Thus, unless they offered the suitable employment, the breveted officer must remain tied fast to his old regimental rank. Had Marshall managed to get his dues as breveted Lieutenant-Colonel he would have quickly become a full Colonel and would probably have started on 4th August 1914 holding a big command. As it was, by 4th August '14 he had been so thoroughly well neglected that his brevets had been wasted. No sooner was peace concluded at Vereeniging than he was relegated to the command of his Company. I would very much like civilian readers to understand exactly what this meant to Marshall. He had entered the Boer War holding a rank which carried with it the command of 100 men. Under stress of active service he had risen to the rank assigned by custom to the Commander of 1,000 men and had actually held under his command several thousand men. Now he was put back again to command 100 men and kept in that grade and at that work for ten solid years. By the end of the ten years his special rank had been wasted; the fine edge of his keenness had been blunted; his less distinguished contemporaries had caught him up again and in some cases passed him by.

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In setting forth these details my object has not been to pillory sin or to extol austere virtues which I do not myself practise. They have been put down as a clue to the character of Marshall and for this reason:—in reading memoirs we are watching successive encounters between a certain character and a series of events: if the narrator can be relied upon for the whole truth it becomes doubly interesting to see how facts strike upon him and how he reacts to them. Therefore, a key to the character of a writer of memoirs should be a real help to the stranger who reads. To the heroes of lady novelists very trifling things happen to which they have tremendous reactions. To Marshall tremendous things happen and he hardly seems to react at all, but he does react and always in the right direction. Many people, especially women, are anxious nowadays to know what men really feel like under fire. In England they encounter great difficulties in the course of their patient researches. Englishmen are trained in their schools to conceal anxiety, pain, and fear. Any expression of the emotions is barred as being "bad form." A babe of nine dares not disclose his sister's name or embrace his own mother with any enthusiasm when she comes down at half-term. As for such high falutin ideas as sailing West in search of glory or of going under for the sake of the flag, these are absolutely taboo. Therefore, we can never afterwards let ourselves go, and an English play of stark war realism like *Journey's End* never tells the whole story. Being so realistic it cannot be quite real, for there is still, in spite of everything, an element of romance in war. So, we have to go to foreigners like Barbusse or Remarque when we wish to strike the deeper currents of emotion. The memoirs of Sir William Marshall are ultra English. There is no emotion. Never does he let himself go. We come to

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realize a sensitive personality in a cloak. The real value of the work lies always in this, that the reader gets the fact or thought exactly as it struck the writer. Never does it reach the printed page damaged or twisted or magnified or minimized by vanity, prejudice, or predilection. I feel sure myself that no one will lay down this book without feeling it is a pity that Marshall was not given fair play during the long peace period between the South African and the World War. When we seek the reason we find it not only in the indifference of the War Office to quiet men who give no trouble but also in the quietude of the quiet.

The dominant *motif* of all Bureaucrats, Bumbles, Tax-Gatherers and other tyrants of the earth is to press back anything original, distinguished or outstanding into "its proper place." The duty of the oppressed is to put up the best fight they can. Once upon a time I too was double breveted and, being in India, had better fortune than Marshall, for, instead of being kept waiting ten years, I was promptly popped into a post which would carry me on automatically to the crucial rank of full Colonel. The War Office were forced to acquiesce because there was no other British Lieutenant-Colonel serving in India who had at the same time passed the Higher Standard in Hindustani and held the "extra first" Hythe Musketry Certificate, both obligatory to the holder of that particular billet. So they did gazette me right enough to a qualifying post, but when the time came to promote me to the full Colonelcy they had the nerve to refuse to carry out their own regulations, saying simply I was too young. A packet of the letters which passed between Sir Fred Roberts and the Duke of Cambridge on the drawbacks of youth, especially in a Colonel, still survive. In the end, Sir Fred Roberts

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was defeated by the royal duke. He was told, if I remember rightly, that he was far too young himself. Not so the infantile yet precocious Ian Hamilton. With the help of Lord William Beresford, the sympathy of the Viceroy was secured. His Excellency was advised that India would only get the scum of the Lieutenant-Colonels if they were to be penalized for serving under Bobs. Soon a dispatch from the Government of India went sailing home to no less an autocrat than the Secretary of State for India, bearing upon it signatures no less impressive than those of Dufferin and Roberts. Down fell the walls of Jericho, but they were rebuilt in time to stop Marshall!

Once again, the main value of this book consists in the weight given to every word of it by the sterling character of the writer. How far away from him he has put the ordinary selfish incentives may be brought home to the student by the following quotation:

"I had better mention that about the middle of June I had to my surprise, certainly to my consternation, been promoted to the rank of Major-General. I presume that promotion is always supposed to be pleasant to the recipient, but fear that to me it did not give the satisfaction it ought to have done. I knew that eventually it would mean leaving the 87th Brigade which I was intensely proud of and devoted to; besides which I was fully aware of my own limitations and considered that command of the finest Brigade in the British Army was good enough for me."

Another quotation:

"Sir Ian Hamilton had been good enough to put forward my name for a C.B. and would not take no for

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PREFACE

AS these reminiscences have been confined to the period of the War, I think it might be well to give the reader a few details of my previous military career. Except during the South African War my service had been almost continuously that of a Company Officer in an Infantry Battalion and the greater part of it had been passed at small stations either in Ireland or India; indeed I must have been one of the very few senior officers of the Army who had never soldiered at that centre of military activity, Aldershot.

After the Frontier Campaign (Malakand and Tirah) of 1897–98, and rather late in my career, I realized that if one wanted to get on in the Army it was almost essential to pass through the Staff College and gain experience on the Staff; so on my return home on leave in 1899, after five years in India, I started to work for the entrance examination; but Fate willed otherwise, the South African War intervened and by the time it was over I had passed the age limit.

In South Africa my experiences were entirely with Mounted Infantry, first as a Company Commander, then in command of the 10th Battalion M.I., and finally, during the last six months, in command of a Mobile Column.

My services during that campaign were rewarded by a double brevet, and I returned home as a Captain and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel to resume command of a Company.

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My military ambition had, however, received a fillip and, being over the age limit for the Staff College, I tried to get employment in work so congenial as that of Mounted Infantry. Unfortunately for me others were adjudged to have greater claims and nothing resulting from my endeavour, I gradually gave up ambitious thoughts and contented myself with commanding a Company to the best of my ability for the greater part of the next ten years. When Shaw succeeded to the command of the Battalion I was the senior Major present with it and spent two happy years as his Second in Command, and to him I owe the fact that I was appointed to the command of a Brigade in the 29th Division early in 1915.

With the exceptions of Smith-Dorrien, Shaw and Maurice, all of my own Regiment, I was unknown to any of the leading soldiers either in the Field or at the War Office and no one could have been more surprised than I was at the rapid promotion which, in less than three years, took me willy nilly from the command of an Infantry Battalion to that of an Army with a ration strength of nearly half a million.

In addition to promotion, honours were heaped on me, and I was created successively C.B., K.C.B., K.C.S.I., G.C.M.G. and awarded the White Eagle of Serbia, the Legion of Honour and the Chinese Order of Wen-hu. In addition, and what I value more than all else, I received two telegrams of congratulation from H.M. the King, the originals of which I keep framed and amongst my most cherished possessions.

These reminiscences have been written, mostly on wet non-hunting days, entirely from memory and without the aid of notes or diaries; even the maps (except the general ones) have been drawn from the same source.

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Under the circumstances there must be many inaccuracies and omissions, but I can only plead that my memory may have played me false and that they are quite unintentional.

The personal pronoun looms somewhat large throughout the book; I have found it most difficult to avoid, so can only apologize for its continual reiteration.

W. R. H.

1929.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

BOMBAY IN 1914 1

CHAPTER II

OFF TO THE WESTERN FRONT 15

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WINTER IN FRANCE 30

CHAPTER IV

WITH THE 29TH DIVISION 42

CHAPTER V

THE GALLIPOLI LANDING 56

CHAPTER VI

GULLY RAVINE 74

CHAPTER VII

TRENCH FIGHTING AT HELLES 93

CHAPTER VIII

STALEMATE AT SUVLA 112

CHAPTER IX

SUVLA EVACUATED 131

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

PAGE

ON THE MACEDONIAN FRONT 150

CHAPTER XI

THE STRUMA VALLEY: LEAVING FOR BASRA . 168

CHAPTER XII

THE OPERATIONS BEFORE KUT 186

CHAPTER XIII

THE VICTORY AT KUT 207

CHAPTER XIV

PUSHING THE TURK NORTHWARDS . . . 227

CHAPTER XV

BAGHDAD: THE DEATH OF MAUDE . . . 245

CHAPTER XVI

I TAKE COMMAND 262

CHAPTER XVII

KHAN BAGDADI 280

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PERSIAN ADVENTURE 297

CHAPTER XIX

MOSUL AND PEACE 315

INDEX 332

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM MARSHALL, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., K.C.S.I. . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

TRENCHES ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA . . . 64

GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON'S HEADQUARTERS . . 70

GULLY BEACH: GALLIPOLI PENINSULA 84

DISTANT VIEW OF ACHI BABA 84

CHOCOLATE HILL 112

SCENE ON WEST BEACH, SUVLA, BEFORE THE EVACUATION 138

SALONIKA 154

RUINS OF KUT, FROM THE ROOF OF GENERAL TOWNSHEND'S HOUSE 188

TRANSPORT CROSSING THE RIVER DYALAH . . . 224

ENTRY OF BRITISH TROOPS INTO BAGHDAD, 11TH MARCH, 1917 230

THE BRITISH RESIDENCY AT BAGHDAD, MADE USE OF FOR OFFICES OF G.H.Q. 230

TELEGRAM FROM THE KING 234

JEBEL HAMARIN, SHOWING PACK TRANSPORT ON THE MOVE. 236

SCENE ON THE COURSE AT THE BAGHDAD RACES . . 254

PARTY FROM THE RUSSIAN FORCE IN PERSIA . . . 264

TELEGRAM FROM THE KING 325

THE AUTHOR ABOUT TO READ THE PROCLAMATION ANNOUNCING CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES WITH TURKEY . 330

MAP SHOWING AREA COVERED BY MESOPOTAMIAN CAMPAIGN *End of Book*

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CHAPTER I

BOMBAY IN 1914

THOUGH it is not strictly within the scope of the title, I propose to include some account of Bombay in the story because, when the Great War broke out, it was there that I donned khaki for the duration thereof.

The battalion which I had the honour to command (1st Battalion The Sherwood Foresters) had arrived in Bombay at the end of 1912 and had then become coast and internal defence troops, with no mobilization equipment, so that it was entirely divorced from any formation in the Field Army. Actually in Bombay itself we had Headquarters and four companies (old style), the remaining four companies being at Deolali.

On reaching Bombay we had come under the command of that able soldier General Gorringe, who had lately been appointed G.O.C. Bombay District, and who had, with characteristic vigour, at once set to work to put his house in order.

Amongst other problems which confronted him was a somewhat complicated one known as "The Bombay Defence Scheme." On this he expended much thought and care; it was entirely redrafted, improved and brought up to date. When I say "brought up to date," I mean as far as funds would permit. The Indian Government has never been noted for lavish expenditure in matters military, and the frontier problem is the only one over which the purse-strings are occasionally loosened, so the

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armament of the Bombay Forts still remained antediluvian. Gorringe carried out a rehearsal of the improved scheme in January of 1914, and this was destined to prove of real value in July of the same year.

My wife and I went to Kashmir in April, and on our return at the end of June she sailed for home on an Austrian-Lloyd boat whilst I rejoined my battalion in Colaba Barracks. The first news received from my wife was a cable which read: "Very ill with enteric, removed to Nursing Home." Though sent from Paris it gave no address with which I could communicate, so I went down to Bombay and managed to get the address through the courtesy of the Eastern Telegraph Company, also, in reply to a cable, more reassuring news.

Bombay lives, moves, and has its being in COTTON, so that great consternation had been caused by a continuous series of mysterious fires during the months of May and June, which had destroyed large quantities of this essential commodity. Gorringe had moved to Deolali with his District Headquarters early in May, but, on the urgent representation of H.E. the Governor, had given permission for troops to be used to assist in guarding the cotton greens against incendiaries. Notwithstanding all precautions the fires still continued, and the cause, or causes, has never to this day been discovered. Presumably they were the result of enemy (German) machinations, though this idea never entered anyone's head at the time. Early in July Gorringe proceeded home on leave, and I, as the next senior officer, went to Deolali to assume temporary command of the District.

Shortly after my return there a cipher wire arrived from Army Headquarters which read: "Precautionary stage Bombay Defences." This happened on 28th July

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and effectually put a stop to my intention of applying for leave home to look after my wife; in fact, private affairs went by the board. Leaving orders for District Headquarters to pack up and follow the next day, I started by the first available train for Bombay to organize preliminary measures for safeguarding the most vital points; such as the manning of the forts, sending out guards for the protection of the power-stations, bridges, dock-gates, etc. The following day Brigade Headquarters arrived and further protective measures were put into operation.

The weather was most inclement, the monsoon being then at its height, and though the parties detailed for guards took tents with them, these were of little or no protection against the torrential rain. The C.R.E. and his sappers helped greatly by rigging up matting shelters over the tents, and providing such comforts as were possible under the circumstances, but the first few days were unavoidably a severe trial to the health of the troops.

Immediately on the declaration of war, His Excellency Lord Willingdon, the very able and popular Governor, came down to Bombay from his summer residence near Poona, and, being shortly followed by Lady Willingdon, took up his residence at Government House on Malabar Point. I was immediately granted an interview by His Excellency, at which I asked what was to be done about the removal of the Germans and Austrians engaged in the cotton and other trades in Bombay. These probable enemy subjects had at once struck me as a potential source of danger and I had asked the police to keep an eye on their movements. He very properly pointed out that this was a matter for the decision of the Government of India, and that the same procedure would have to be followed in Bombay as

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in Calcutta, Rangoon, Karachi and other ports, but promised he would wire that day for instructions.

These instructions were only received after a lapse of more than a week. They were to the effect that enemy subjects of military age should be interned under military arrangements, and that any others whom the O.C. Troops, Bombay, considered to be undesirable might be interned under civil arrangements. However, pending a decision from the Government of India, His Excellency was good enough to allow me, through the Commissioner of Police, to keep a check on the movements of these enemy subjects by the institution of a system of roll-calls and police supervision.

It has always been a matter of astonishment to me that the Germans seem never to have thought out a plan for at least delaying the departure of an expeditionary force from India. To render Bombay useless, for a time, as a base of embarkation would have been such a very simple operation. There were in the harbour at this time several ships of the " Hansa " line, but they were given twenty-four hours' grace and cleared out. Not having been coaled they could not go far, so they made for the neutral port of Marmagoa in Portuguese territory.

The coal supply there being controlled by an English firm, warned from Bombay not to supply them, they got no farther, and I suppose were eventually taken over by the Portuguese, after that nation had entered the war on the side of the Allies. Very soon the Port war station, examination anchorage, etc., were in working order, and when another " Hansa " line ship came in, it was taken possession of. It was curious that no news of the outbreak of war had reached her, because she had on board a fully equipped wireless apparatus, which she attempted to use when interned ; it was then broken up, instead of

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being removed, by a zealous but somewhat hasty subaltern.

There were rumours about this time that the German cruiser squadron in the Pacific (*Scharnhorst, Gneisenau,* etc.) was on its way round via Singapore, and the native population of Bombay began to be decidedly nervous; Zeppelins had been seen by many—in fact the usual crop of hysterical rumours was afloat. To give confidence to the population their Excellencies Lord and Lady Willingdon drove through the crowded bazaars, their smiling progress doing much to reassure the people. I did not see this procession myself, but heard that the effect was wonderful and that they were hailed as if they had been protecting deities.

The wing of my battalion had come down from Deolali and Army Headquarters was busy with the preparation of the Indian Expeditionary Force for France, which consisted of the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions, the whole under command of General Sir James Willcocks. I was asked to obtain, if possible, a dozen volunteers as motor-cycle dispatch-riders for the Expeditionary Force, and these were at once forthcoming from the ranks of the Bombay Light Horse, consisting of young business men in Bombay, amongst them a fine young fellow named Webster to whom I shall refer later.

The head of the Royal Indian Marine, Captain Lumsden, R.N., was at home on leave and his place was taken by a senior officer of that service from Calcutta, who commandeered ships of all sorts and sizes from the eastern seas, and remarkably disreputable old tramps some of them were. These were gradually assembled in the new Victoria Dock at Bombay to be fitted up as transports. The small establishment of the Royal Indian Marine dockyard had neither the men nor material to

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carry out this work, but the big railway companies at once came forward with the necessary artificers and material, the G.I.P. Railway being particularly helpful. These, ably assisted by the sappers and miners from Kirkee, made rapid progress in fitting up the available ships.

In addition to placing guards on the dock-gates, I had got the Port Trust to anchor every evening a barrier of empty native craft on the seaward side of the gates in order to protect them against a surprise night attack by mine or torpedo from a boat party. The Port Trust, always helpful, also very kindly lent me a large dredger, fitted with a powerful searchlight, which was anchored between Elephanta and Oyster Rock, in order completely to light up the entrance to the harbour, the searchlights from the above-named forts not being sufficiently powerful for the purpose. This dredger was garrisoned by a detachment of the Sherwood Foresters supplemented by a machine gun. Arrangements were made for the protection of the water-supply as well as of the sewage outfall works, both very vital to the life of Bombay. The protection of the tunnels and of the railway over the Ghauts had been taken over by troops detailed by Army Headquarters, which had also established a censorship to replace the original temporary arrangement.

To revert to the German and Austrian subjects living in Bombay; I had, as soon as the orders of the Government of India were received, interviewed them at the office of the Commissioner of Police and decided to intern practically all the Germans, though more lenient in the case of the Austrians. Curiously enough the Austrian Consul was still a member of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club and continued to make use of it; he was in

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attendance when I interviewed the Austrian subjects and I accepted his guarantee for the good behaviour of most of those who did not come within the military age category. I had urged upon His Excellency the desirability of getting rid of the German priests, somewhat numerous in the Bombay Presidency, and of the German and Austrian *filles de joie*, also numerous, but was overruled on the advice of the Commissioner of Police, who thought they could not do any harm. It was not until some time after I had left India that these two widely different classes were sent away on the same ship to be repatriated.

Needless to say I had had a good deal to think about and plenty of work to do, and, so far as my capabilities went, had done my best; it was therefore somewhat in the nature of a shock when, at the end of about a fortnight, General Aitken came into the brigade office one morning and showed me a telegram from A.H.Q., which he had received the previous evening. This directed him to proceed at once to Bombay and assume command there. I did not particularly want to continue in command, but also did not quite like being treated in this somewhat cavalier fashion. I explained all the dispositions made, and the work in progress, to General Aitken and took him round at least part of the defences that day. That evening, however, I wrote to the G.O.C. Poona Division, under whose direct command the Bombay Brigade was, to ask wherein my fault lay and why I had been so summarily superseded. In answer I received a very nice letter which said that he entirely approved of all I had done, that the division had not been consulted in the matter and that he was sending on my letter to the G.O.C. Southern Army with his own comments. Later I got a charming letter from Sir Arthur

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Barrett (commanding Southern Army) saying that he was entirely satisfied with my work and had written to A.H.Q., protesting against their action.

General Aitken only remained in Bombay for about ten days, during which time I naturally did all I could to assist him with my local knowledge. I also got time to look more after my own battalion and to visit the various detachments. The men on the dredger I found to my surprise were thoroughly enjoying themselves, in spite of their isolation, spending most of their spare time bathing and fishing. One day General Aitken sent for me and showed me a telegram from A.H.Q., informing him that he had been selected for command of a force destined for German East Africa, directing him to hand over command at Bombay to me and return to Poona at once to mobilize his brigade and organize the force. Knowing that it could not be many days before General Gorringe reached Bombay, I took over again with as good a grace as possible.

Work on the transports was proceeding satisfactorily, and, owing to the fact that the Victoria Dock had not been brought into commercial use, there were plenty of empty warehouses for the accommodation of military stores; as well as to provide shelter for troops prior to embarkation. A special officer (Colonel Douglas) was sent down to take up the position of Chief Embarkation Officer and other officers were appointed as his assistants. The first convoy of the Indian expeditionary force started for Marseilles escorted by H.M.S. *Highflier* (a second-class cruiser but the most powerful ship on the East Indies Station). As I foresaw, it was not long before General Gorringe arrived to take over his command and I went back permanently to my battalion.

We, the Sherwood Foresters, had resigned ourselves to

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remain at Bombay as coast defence troops, so much so that I consented to send four of my officers to the Dorsetshire Regiment, then a unit of General Aitken's force, to bring them up to strength. However, on Monday, 30th August, at 12.30 p.m. I received a telephone message that General Gorringe wished to see me at once. On arrival at the Brigade Office he handed me a telegram from A.H.Q. which read: "Can Sherwood Foresters embark for England on Wednesday next—relief scale—women and children?" I thought rapidly and then said "Yes, sir!"

Hastening back to barracks I met Wright, our very able Quartermaster, just leaving his office and greeted him with the news. Definitely I said: "The Regiment has to embark for England on Wednesday, relief scale, women and children and the whole of the baggage must be ready by 8.30 a.m. on that day." Wright's face was a study; it grew long and he said: "You can't do it, sir." I replied: "It can and shall be done, though I fully realize that it means very hard work for everyone." He then asked: "How will it be possible to close the Indian Clothing Ledger?" I replied: "If it is not closed the fact will hardly shake the Empire to its foundations." Next he said: "How will it be possible to return all the ordnance stores?" To this I answered: "If there is no other way the sea might be a convenient place in which to stow them—and anyhow, we are going on Wednesday."

After his first protest in defence of his carefully kept ledgers nobody could have worked harder or more efficiently than the inestimable Wright to get things going and eventually to get us ready in time. The greatest difficulty arose on account of the widely scattered detachments. These all had to be relieved, to enable

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officers and men to get ready, by those who had to get ready hastily themselves. Impedimenta such as ponies, traps, rifles, etc., were sold, if possible, or left behind—bank accounts were closed—surplus stores disposed of and an orgy of packing took place. Very early on Wednesday morning the Hampshire Regiment arrived to relieve us; detachments were brought in, baggage and married families sent down to the docks, and at 1.30 p.m. I marched down the very hot and steamy four miles to the Victoria Dock at the head of one of the finest battalions in the British Army and therefore in the world.

The men had been got on board and their rifles and equipment stowed away, when I received a message to say that their Excellencies the Governor and Lady Willingdon were coming down to say farewell to the Battalion—an unexpected honour and greatly appreciated by all ranks. Later General Gorringe arrived to bid us God-speed. He wished to make a speech to the men, but as there was a difficulty in getting them together he handed me an address for publication in orders. In this he referred in laudatory terms to the good discipline and military efficiency of the Battalion whilst under his command, stating his certainty that, under any and every trial to come, the Battalion would acquit itself in a manner worthy of its reputation, and wishing us all God-speed. From General Gorringe praise was praise indeed and I felt more than ever proud of being in command of the Battalion which had evoked it.

General Gorringe had gone and our transport was about to move when a warrant officer of the Indian Ordnance Corps saluted me and said: "I have brought you your water-bottles, sir." I replied: "Thank you, but we have already got the full complement of water-

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bottles." He said: "Yes, sir! but those are *Indian* pattern and these I have brought from Kirkee are *English* pattern." I replied: "Well, the ones we have hold water, therefore answer the purpose, so I don't propose to change them." This rather took him aback, and the transport being about to move, I got on board. The Ordnance man had had a staggerer, but, recovering himself, he walked down the quay as the ship slowly moved out and vociferated: "I will send the English pattern water-bottles out in a boat, sir." To this I could only reply: "If you do I will sink it." The threat was evidently enough, no boat filled with antediluvian water-bottles appeared, so presumably they went back sadly to Kirkee arsenal weeping, or rather leaking.

We moved out into the roadstead that evening, and next morning the convoy which we joined (the other ships being those containing the second part of the Indian Expeditionary Force) was marshalled by H.M.S. *Dartmouth* (3rd Class Cruiser) and off we went in two lines at a rate of about eight knots. It had been a breathless and sleepless two days for all of us, so we were not sorry to be stowed on board the good ship *Thongwa* with Captain Irvine to pilot us safely through the monsoon. Except that we were bound for England we had no idea what fate had in store for us. I rather favoured the theory that we might be expanded into a brigade, each platoon forming the nucleus of a new company, and had time been available this would no doubt have been a good plan; but time and the enemy do not wait, and every man fit to take his place in the field was urgently needed in France. I have intimated that our speed was somewhat slow, so very soon keen young officers began to ask whether I thought we should ever get out to France in time, to which I answered that if the voyage did not last

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more than two years there was no need to worry, we should be there in plenty of time. But I don't think they believed me—until after the war.

The voyage, like most voyages, was uneventful, though there were many delays owing to some of the old tramps, doing duty as transports, breaking down. Some were short of stokers, others even had none, but the troops manfully volunteered for the job and we carried on. A German cruiser was reported to be lurking in the neighbourhood of Socotra and was evidently very much in the mind of our naval commander (the Captain of H.M.S. *Dartmouth*). I happened to be with the signallers on duty when the following message was signalled to all ships:

"I can hardly hope to reach Aden with the convoy without being attacked; it therefore behoves every Captain to keep his station correctly. The enemy's tactics will be to cut off any ship which may lag behind and lose touch. In such case it were better for that Captain that he should not survive the capture of his ship."

I did not want such a message to reach the ears of the women, so I swore the signallers to secrecy and took the message myself to Captain Irvine.

We did reach Aden in safety, and there H.M.S. *Dartmouth* took leave of the convoy and a fresh escort took us up the Red Sea to Suez. As the subaltern recorded in his diary, "we had a smooth passage through the canal" and debouched in Port Said about 6 a.m. The harbour was crowded with transports and warships, and for some time we did not know at what hour we were to proceed farther, but about 11 a.m. Captain Irvine told me his orders were that the whole convoy would start at 7 a.m. the following day.

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On receiving this news I made arrangements to let half the officers and half the married families go ashore until 3 p.m. and, on their return, the other half to go until 6 p.m. About 3.30 p.m. I went ashore and, as is usual, proceeded to the emporium of one Simon Arz, where, in the middle of getting a portrait or caricature (I hope the latter) done by the ten-minute artist, Captain Hume rushed in and said that the convoy was leaving at 4.30 p.m., viz. in about half an hour. I asked him to get hold of some buglers to sound the Regimental Call—the Retire and the Double. This had the required effect and everyone was again on board by 4.30 p.m., but—*we did not sail until next morning after all!* I heard later, though I could hardly credit the story, that the senior naval officer had expressed strong disapproval of anyone going ashore, so had signalled his intention of starting the convoy in order to get everyone back on board.

Our transport steamed with the convoy until we reached the Gulf of Lyons, after which we parted company (I am not sure whether with or without leave) and made our way at a greatly improved speed to Plymouth. About 7 a.m. on 2nd October we were alongside the quay, and a staff officer came on board to announce that a train was waiting to convey us to Romsey, whence we were to march to Hursley Park, near Winchester, and join the 8th Division, which was in camp there engaged in mobilization. I told him that the train would probably have to continue to wait; that it would take most of the day to unload all the baggage; that this baggage must be stored safely; that the married families had to be sent off to their destinations; that, in fact, there were a thousand-and-one things to be done which had evidently not entered the heads of the Plymouth staff.

Shortly after this interview the G.O.C. Plymouth

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Defences came on board and began a similar argument to the effect that the train was waiting and we must entrain at once, that the G.O.C. 8th Division wanted us at Hursley that day, if not sooner. Again I had to point out the absolute impossibility of our moving from Plymouth that day, but assured him that we should be ready to entrain the following day at 10 a.m. I fear he was not very satisfied and even thought me an obstructionist, but it could not be helped. Everyone worked hard all that day and we received every assistance from the Plymouth staff, who had eventually come to realize what the difficulties were. The Battalion was ready in every detail by the following morning. At 10 a.m. on 3rd October, as I had promised, we had entrained and were *en route* to join the 8th Division.

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CHAPTER II

OFF TO THE WESTERN FRONT

THAT afternoon, in glorious weather, we reached Hursley Park, the seat of Sir George Cooper. The park was beautiful and, in the dry weather then prevailing, appeared to be an ideal camping ground; the ideal did not last long, but of that later. We were welcomed by our Brigade Commander, General Carter, in whose brigade I had served, as a company commander, some four years previously, when our 2nd Battalion was stationed at Fermoy. The other units of the 24th Brigade were the Worcesters, Northamptons, and East Lancashire. The last-named battalion was commanded by Nicholson, an old friend, who had been Carter's Brigade Major at Fermoy; the Brigadier being good enough to say that he thought himself very lucky to have got Nicholson and myself, whom he had known before, as battalion commanders in his brigade.

Meanwhile my wife, after a series of adventures, had reached England and was recuperating at Westgate-on-Sea. She was able, however, to come to Hursley, and, thanks to the never-to-be-forgotten kindness of the Hon. George and Mrs. Hewitt, who lived quite near and put her up, I was enabled to see quite a lot of her and Jack (my stepson, and as dear to me as my own son could have been). She had not been long in the nursing home in Paris before the French began mobilization and both doctors and nurses were called up for service. However, an English doctor and nurse attended her, and gradually

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she became convalescent. Luckily Jack was in France at the time and at once went to Paris to look after his mother; though only a boy of sixteen, he proved the right man in the right place and, thanks to his exertions, she was got away safely to England via St. Malo. She was hardly fit to travel, and as the trains were packed with refugees from Paris, the journey was the reverse of comfortable; indeed I am sure it was only her own indomitable pluck which carried her through without a serious collapse.

The 8th Division, commanded by General Davis, an ex-guardsman, and therefore a stickler for the right kind of discipline, was a very fine one, composed entirely of units of the Regular Army gathered from the four quarters of the Empire. Nearly every infantry battalion in it had, for the first time, to adopt the new four-company organization which had not, up to that time, been in vogue in India. My well-meant endeavours to impress responsibility on subalterns placed in command of platoons were not altogether popular, judging by a doggerel I came across. Each verse of this referred to some particular fault and ended with the refrain—

"Who then gets it in the neck?
The Platoon Commander."

However, nothing new is ever popular in the British Army. I have always held that for infantry the three essentials are, 1st, Discipline; 2nd, Shooting; 3rd, Marching, and that everything else is "leather and prunella." With these essentials thoroughly ingrained into a battalion new methods of manœuvre or internal administration come under the heading of "leather and prunella."

Almost immediately after our arrival at Hursley half the men proceeded on four days' leave to see their people,

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and on their return the other half went. It thus happened that for the first ten days I could not get the Battalion together for drill and manœuvre under the new system and that by that time we had had rain—buckets of it; the soil was clay, and in a few days the mud, especially round the tents, gave us a foretaste of conditions in France. Sir George Cooper saw his beautiful grassy glades becoming sloughs of despond, and was hardly consoled when assured that eventually the land would be immensely improved thereby. Owing to a shortage of equipment mobilization was a slow performance, but everyone was busy, particularly in the Adjutant's and Quartermaster's departments.

I went up to town to interview the "subaltern's friend" (Messrs. Cox & Co.) and, amongst other things, was there told that we should remain on Indian pay, but I could not believe that we, having been sent home on relief scale, could possibly continue to draw the same pay, and allowances, as in India. (I may mention, for the benefit of the uninitiated, that the term Indian "pay" is entirely a misnomer. In the old days the King's forces serving in India drew the same "pay" as in England, but, as no mess, officers' quarters, servants, transport, tents, or chargers were provided, allowances for these were given instead. Gradually these have come to be regarded as part of Indian "pay.")

With the above explanation it seems inexplicable that the Government should have continued to pay British officers from India at the rate prevailing out there. It was so, however, and when eventually appointed to command a brigade I was the poorer by about £300 a year.

The Battalion having finished its furlough, we began

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a short period of training to accustom all ranks to the new drill and especially in moving in artillery formations, deploying from those for the attack, and in taking up defensive positions by siting and marking out trench lines, in which exercises we benefited by the fact that our Corps Commander, Sir H. Rawlinson, had come over to superintend the training and give us the results of his experiences in France and Flanders. After this we had a few brigade field-days and eventually the Division, fully mobilized, carried out an exercise march. It was the first time I had ever seen a fully mobilized division on the move, and, though I knew, theoretically, that it occupied about fifteen miles of road space, the demonstration greatly impressed the fact on one's mind.

All battalions in the Division had been ordered to recommend five non-commissioned officers for commissions, so I selected these with the idea that they would remain with the Battalion and be useful in various capacities. However, we had to part with three of them, but got some quite excellent young O.T.C. officers in their stead. The senior Company Sergeant-Major (Chambers) at first wished to decline the honour, saying that his desire had always been to become Regimental Sergeant-Major of the Battalion, but eventually he was persuaded to drop his vaulting ambition and become a Second Lieutenant instead.

Miller, lately transferred to us from 10th Bengal Lancers, who had been appointed Transport Officer, most unfortunately became a casualty (getting his leg broken as the result of a kick from a horse) and had to go into hospital at Hursley, where the kindly and energetic Lady Cooper had fitted up a wing of the Hall and equipped it as a Hospital for Officers; in which, strangely enough, one of her own sons (in the 9th

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Lancers), wounded in France, became almost the first patient.

Very shortly after the divisional march referred to orders came for the 8th Division to embark at Southampton *en route* for Havre. We (the Sherwood Foresters) began our march at 2 p.m. on 4th November, and as we passed their gate the Hewitts, with my wife and Jack, were there to wave us a cheery farewell. Dusk was falling as we entered the streets of Southampton and made our way to the docks, through, and accompanied by, an enthusiastic crowd. Being insignificant in appearance and "on my flat feet," I escaped the attentions of the crowd, but not so Wright, who, being a big man on a large horse, was conspicuous as he rode at the rear of the Battalion, where emotional and tearful women crowded round him, saying, "God bless you, Colonel, bring the boys back safe"; whilst the male population exhorted him to "kill all the bloody Germans." On reaching the docks we formed up in one of the sheds, where we piled arms and unburdened ourselves of packs and equipment.

I may mention here that at this period the regulation Army socks were amongst the many deficiencies in our ordnance stores, but my wife had managed to get enough, through various stores and agencies, to give each man a third pair. I refer to this because during the time we were in the shed a number of men had discarded the socks in which they had marched and donned a new pair, and the shed, when the Battalion marched out, was littered with perfectly good socks which only required washing. The improvidence of that prince of good fellows, the British soldier, can be sometimes rather trying. However, I had the precious socks collected and brought along, so they were not wasted after all.

We embarked about 9 p.m., and reached Havre next

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morning at an early hour. Having disembarked, we marched some three and a half miles to the camping grounds, on the plateau overlooking the town. During the time we were there many of our men were, one day, looking on at some exercises being carried out by a French Territorial Regiment; the parade being over, the French troops rushed at the onlookers and kissed them heartily on both cheeks, much to the embarrassment of the British soldiers thus saluted and the great joy of those who escaped.

A football match between officers and sergeants resulted in yet another casualty amongst the officers: Wyncoll sprained his ankle, and, though it was not a very severe sprain, he was unable to walk. When we left by train on the evening of 9th November, bound for Merville, we took him along, with the hope that in a few days he would be all right again; but as, later, when we were ordered up to the front line, he was still unable to march, he was sent to hospital and the Battalion never saw him again.

Arriving at Merville on the following afternoon, we proceeded to billets in the neighbourhood of Neuf Berquin; where one's original idea of billeting received a somewhat rude shock. In France roof shelter of any sort, however crowded, was considered to be a billet; the lucky ones got the luxury of a barn, a stable, or a cow-shed; though the two latter might be encumbered by the presence of equine or bovine inhabitants respectively. Given fine weather, things were not so bad, though scattered billets do not tend to maintain a general smartness, and moreover entail more guard duty for the troops. The French seemed to be insatiable collectors of souvenirs, and one had to be very strict in order to prevent men from parting with trifles such as regimental badges

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and buttons. Men of new drafts, joining the Battalion later, often arrived minus these necessary articles and had to be put under stoppages to make good their value. I can recall now the horror of seeing a sentry (one of a newly arrived draft) whose cap, minus the badge, was ornamented in indelible pencil with the mystic word SHUNTY and whose neck was enveloped in a bright red scarf.

At this early stage of the war the British soldier had not yet learned to converse in the French language with that ease and fluency to which he attained later, when he was able to make known all his wishes by means of one of those portmanteau words, such as "Nah pooh," "Doolay," "Nobong." His vocabulary indeed was limited to the word he so often heard, viz. "Souvenir."

When a motor-lorry ran over and killed a pig in the street of Merville the driver promptly descended and placing the defunct porker inside, drove off waving his hand and saying "Souvenir" to the excited owner and his friends.

Sometimes it seems to me wasted energy really to learn a language when one sees the British soldier getting along perfectly well by the aid of one word. In South Africa "Ikona" answered all and every purpose; whilst in Mesopotamia the word to conjure with was "Imshi."[1] I remember riding one day with an A.D.C. past a Kurdish Labour Corps, consisting of about 800 men, with a British private in charge. Wishing to call the Kurds to attention, the soldier shouted "Imshi," at the same time standing himself to attention. The Kurds promptly dropped their tools and followed suit. When we had passed on I heard him again shout "Here Imshi," upon which the Kurds seized their picks and shovels and set to work again.

[1] Imshi = Go away.

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Whilst at Neuf Berquin we, Battalion staffs and company commanders, were taken on a personally conducted tour by our Brigadier to Laventie, where there were some trench lines, then unoccupied. On the arrival of our motor-lorries at the cross-roads in the village, we descended and made our way towards the trenches we had come to view, but as we moved across, a bombardier of a battery, in position near by, told us that the German guns opposite had got the range and we inferred that there *were* safer places in the world. We had hardly reached our objective when, sure enough, the Germans proceeded to hate us violently. Our inspection was hurried in the extreme and we made tracks for our waiting lorries. Hardly had we left the cross-roads than dirty work began there; houses were demolished and set on fire whilst the wretched inhabitants fled along the roads to the rear. The first battle of Ypres was at this time drawing to its close and the Channel ports had been saved. Leveson-Gower, then commanding our 2nd Battalion, came over to see us and gave us some account of the operations, which had spelled disaster to his battalion, half of which, left too long in an isolated position, had been surrounded and captured.

After three days at Neuf Berquin we moved up at night to the front and were directed to billets near Vieille Chapelle. On arrival we found the billets already occupied by Royal Field Artillery, whose horses were stabled in the large barns and sheds which I wanted for the men. It took some time to persuade the gunner officer to move his horses into the open, so that it was midnight before we got settled in. The following evening two of our companies, commanded by Castle and Hume, were sent into the trenches, being attached respectively to the Northamptons and East Lancashire.

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Headquarters and the remaining two companies were ordered to billet in a farm on the Estaires–La Bassée road (known afterwards as "The Red Barn"). Again on arrival we found the billets already occupied; this time by the Royal Deccan Horse, but we managed somehow to get stowed away for the night; I think on this occasion even the pigsties became billets—within the meaning of the Act.

Things appeared to be lively in the trenches and firing was continuous. About 11.30 p.m. I received a message from Hume, sent on by Nicholson, which read: "Owing to the mud most of the extractor springs of my rifles are broken. I must have more ammunition." Not altogether liking the look of this message, I thought it better to go down and personally see what was going on. Accordingly I set off, accompanied by Dobbie, to Nicholson's headquarters to ask his permission to visit Hume's company. On arrival there I found Nicholson obsessed with the idea that large numbers of German snipers were operating behind our lines and averring that anyone going down to the trenches was shot at by the said snipers; however, he gave me permission to go, so Dobbie, who knew the way, and I started off. On the way we met a few men who warned us of various places where we might expect to be shot at by the aforesaid snipers. A few bullets fell about and one heard the occasional sharp cracks of rifles, but I kept my eyes open for flashes and, not seeing any, came to the conclusion that the sniper theory was a myth; the shots, unaimed ones, really coming from the German trenches, which were after all very close.

Arriving in the trenches, which were deplorably narrow, so much so that movement along them was difficult when one had to pass other men, I found Hume and

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asked whether he had been attacked, to which he replied, "No, sir." I then said that such being the case I could not understand what he had been firing for at all. I found that his statement about the rifles was correct; owing to the very narrow trenches, it was impossible to keep the bolts free from mud, and this, combined with continued firing, had jammed a great many rifles; when the men tried to draw back the bolts, the extractor spring screws, a weak part of the mechanism, had been broken. For this there was no remedy at the time, so leaving orders that on no account should there be any more firing, unless the enemy attempted to rush the trenches, Dobbie and I made the best of our way back. I asked him to keep a sharp look-out for flashes on our left whilst I did the same on the right, but, though bullets fell and rifle cracks continued, we saw nothing. This experience left me a confirmed unbeliever in "the sniper behind the lines" myth, yet it is astonishing how long it persisted; even in Gallipoli many weird stories were invented by the imaginative and firmly believed in by others.

I happened one day to mention my disbelief in snipers to General Davis, upon which he said: "Oh well, we caught two the other day." That seemed to prove me entirely wrong; but he went on to say: "Yes! The gunners caught them; about daybreak they noticed two men, dressed as peasants, entering an empty farm and that they were carrying rifles. Surrounding the farm they rushed it and found the rifles in the kitchen; a further search discovered the two men hidden under some straw. They were taken to Divisional Headquarters and handed over to the Assistant Provost Marshal. Being interviewed by the interpreter in various languages, no answer was forthcoming, so the A.P.M. ordered them to

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be taken out and made to dig their own graves. On hearing this one of the men said: "I beg your pardon, sir, but we belongs to the —— Regiment."

Another story on the same subject. One day an officer of 5th Black Watch said to me: "Did you hear that the sappers caught a sniper last night?" I said: "No! Tell me about it." He then told the following yarn:

"The sappers, being suspicious about where some shots were coming from, searched the suspected area and eventually discovered a German sniper in a concealed hole. The hiding-place was well supplied both with ammunition and food, and judging by the number of empty cases the man must have been there a long time."

I inquired what had been done with the sniper, but was led to understand that trial had been dispensed with and he was now safely underground. That afternoon a sapper officer came in, so I said to him: "I hear your fellows caught a sniper last night." To this he replied: "No! we didn't, but the 5th Black Watch did." He then told me an exactly similar story about the concealed sniper and his subsequent fate.

The following evening my two detached companies rejoined the Battalion and went into billets in the immediate neighbourhood of the "Red Barn." We became the Battalion in Brigade Reserve and due to relieve the Worcesters in "A" trenches two days later. The attached rough sketch will give an idea of the distribution of the 24th Brigade and the Trench System.

General Carter announced his intention of visiting "A" lines trenches and I was ordered to meet him at the Worcesters' Headquarters at 3 p.m., accompanied by Mortimore and Stranger. Shortly after our arrival there the Boche thought fit to drop a few 5·9 shells about the

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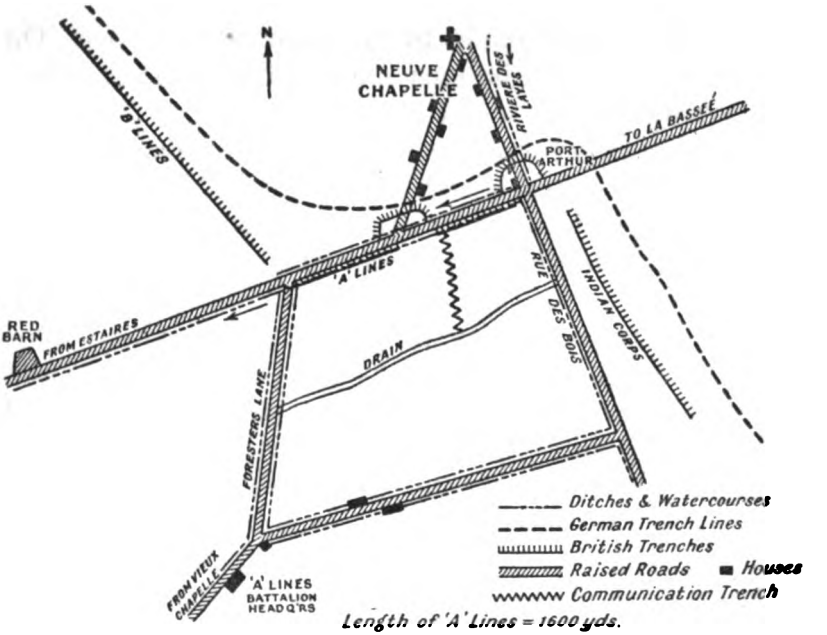

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

place. I think really they were having a search round for one of our batteries, but anyhow the party thought the cellars a suitable place to retire to. I was about to go there also when I noticed that the sentry would be left all by his lonesome, so I stayed behind to help to give him confidence. The strafe soon stopped and the house was not hit ; so about 4.30 p.m. Lascelles (O.C. Worcesters) marshalled the procession for the trenches. The order was single file, ten paces between each officer, and all to conform to Lascelles's movements, he being the leader of the party.

We proceeded along the right-hand side of Forester's Lane, keeping to the muddy ditch and making ourselves as small as possible. Whilst in this ridiculous position we were passed by three men of the Worcesters who were marching cheerily along the road towards the trenches

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whistling " Tipperary "—talk about being caught bending—well we were indeed ! ! ! On reaching the " Drain," a particularly muddy one, we went up that and eventually reached the front line via the communication trench. By that time it was too dark to see much or get the hang of the lines, so we made the best of our way back just as wise as before. The darkness at least had the advantage of preventing a repetition of the ridiculous procession. A glance at the rough sketch (drawn entirely from memory but, I think, fairly accurate) will show in what an unwise tactical position " A " lines were situated. During the severe fighting in this neighbourhood at the end of October the Indian Corps had been gradually pushed back, but eventually succeeded in checking the German advance and, when really active hostilities ceased, had still retained its hold on that portion of the Estaires—La Bassée road which afterwards became "A" lines. The raised roads, ditches, and watercourses will give the reader some idea of what the country was like in the winter.

The Rivière des Layes received the drainage from the Aubers Ridges, and the big ditches on each side of the Estaires–La Bassée road carried the water eventually into the River Lys near Estaires. The soil of this delectable piece of country was of the most glutinous clay, to a depth of about five feet, below which one came on greensand and therefore water. The ditch on the south side of the raised Estaires–La Bassée road, besides being a water-way of the country, had evidently also done duty as a drain for the village of Neuve Chapelle, so the mud in the adapted trench line was not even of the clean variety. The whole of the ground between the Battalion Headquarters and " A " lines was exposed to a cross-fire from the German trenches, which made the reliefs every

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third day a record of casualties; besides making them a lengthy and laborious process. In point of fact it took more than four and a half hours to carry out the reliefs, one platoon at a time, and the casualties varied in numbers every three days; on one occasion they reached seventy-five. I may say now that, when the rain really came in earnest towards the end of December, "A" lines became a welter of mud and water.

I had reconnoitred for a new line which would eliminate the dangerous salient and fixed on one that would at least have the advantage of comparatively simple relief, would enable Battalion Headquarters to be nearer the actual defence line, and one in which the men would not be perpetually up to their knees in liquid mud. I then put my proposition to General Carter and he agreed to submit it to the Division. Not hearing any result for a week, I again tackled Carter and was told that the Division had replied: "That never would we give up one yard of ground we had once gained." I could only say: "Well, I had always understood that one of the soundest military axioms was: 'That ground, except it possessed tactical value, was useless in warfare.'" Anyhow that ended the matter; it is a dangerous thing for a subordinate officer to put forward views in opposition to his superiors, however trying it may be for him to see the men he is proud of and devoted to being, as he considers, uselessly sacrificed.

But—and I think this is a very grave criticism—during the time I was in France (some three months) the G.O.C. Division never, to my knowledge, saw the "A" lines trenches; even the Brigadier only went there twice. I am free to admit that I did not want them there, but, as was fully recognized later in the war, personal knowledge by the higher commanders of the conditions under

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which the men entrusted to their care are living is a *sine qua non*. This absurd worship of ground as such was an absolute negation of our previous military training. Instead of holding a line of observation close to the enemy, and a line of resistance farther back, almost every man was in the front line and there were practically no reserves. The resulting casualties, the weariness engendered in the troops, and sickness from trench feet, and so on, could hardly have been borne by any less stout-hearted fellows than British soldiers.

The salient I have been discussing concerned only a small number of men, but I wonder what history will say about the continued holding of the Ypres salient, with its record of 250,000 dead. One was told that it was held for sentimental reasons, but, if that was the case, I can only say that such costly sentiment is out of place in war.

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CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WINTER IN FRANCE

ON 19th November we duly relieved the Worcesters in "A" lines trenches. The companies marched down separately, as far as Battalion Headquarters, at intervals of three quarters of an hour, and then dispatched a platoon at a time under charge of a guide from the Worcesters, at varying intervals, to relieve a Worcester platoon.

The ground over which the reliefs took place was then comparatively dry, so the operation was complete in about four hours and casualties were few; in fact I only remember that one man was hit and that the bullet struck him in the right side of his chest. He promptly turned to another man saying: "Bill, which side is me 'eart?" On being assured that the heart was on the left side he said cheerfully—"Oh well! That's all right then."

Battalion Headquarters were an absurdly long way, some 1,200 yards, from the trenches, but, owing to the nature of the position, it had to be so, and to make matters worse we were without any field telephone equipment, so that my only communication with the front line was by means of runners. These runners used to go up and down between Battalion Headquarters and the trenches at all hours of the day and night, always under fire, always willing and cheery. One has got to live with the British soldier to realize what a perfectly splendid fellow he is.

Very early the following morning I went off to the

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trenches and found everyone busy trying to get shipshape. Having discussed various matters for improving the position with my company commanders, I returned to Headquarters for breakfast, taking Dilworth, machine gun officer, with me. I talked to Dilworth about the use of machine guns and asked him to have a good look round to try to find some position whence he could get a view of any line of approach used by the enemy so that a machine gun might be mounted there. I greatly fear I must have expressed myself badly, because on his return to the trenches he took Sergeant Miller (M.G. Sergeant) and Lance-Corporal Walters with him and went out to a house which stood some 40 yards in front of the centre of our position. The party actually reached the house, but on Dilworth turning the corner to search for the entrance, he was promptly shot by a German, who in turn was equally promptly shot by Sergeant Miller. More Germans appeared, and as Miller and Walters were attempting to carry off Dilworth's body Walters was also killed. Miller got safely back to the trenches and reported to Sherbrooke, the nearest platoon commander.

He promptly called for volunteers and led a dash to recover the bodies, but the enemy was by this time on the *qui vive* and drove them back with several casualties, amongst them being Sherbrooke, shot through the chest. That evening another attempt was made to bring in the bodies, and in this Captain Campbell was unfortunately killed. Casualties amongst officers were increasing. Hume and Castle, both constitutionally unable to stand the wet, cold, and strain, went sick very shortly and were never again passed fit for service. The company commanders then became Morley, Webbe, Hodgson, and Dixon.

Towards the end of November or early December we

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had hard frost and consequently a dry spell, which lasted for about three weeks or more ; though bitterly cold this was a welcome change from the previous mud. I had instructed my company commanders that on no account was any firing to take place at night, unless to repel an attack by the enemy. After a time, however, I began to see that whilst we continued to sustain casualties through enemy fire, the Germans *must* remain immune if we never fired at all. I therefore modified the order and decreed that during the night the men manning the parapets should be ordered to fire by the visiting officers and sergeants, viz. one or two rounds at each visit at varying ranges. Later this plan was improved on. Mortimore worked out a system of squared maps, and companies were allotted certain squares to fire on during the night ; ranges were taken from the map and aiming posts arranged on the parapet. Whether this effort caused any enemy casualties could not be known, but at least it gave the weary men some slight consolation during the long hours of darkness.

Finding that ammunition got left about on the fire-step and parapet and so trampled into the mud, and that picks and shovels got mislaid, I instituted the system of having a platoon storeman to collect, clean, re-clip and store all ammunition which he found lying about, also to keep a list of, and take charge of, all tools drawn by his platoon. I also got the Pioneer Sergeant to make rough trench arm-racks for use during the day, so that at night the rifles should be free from mud. It was certainly annoying to find that sometimes the relieving battalion had used these arm-racks for fuel and others had to be made. An armourer's shop was also established in the trenches during the day time, where minor defects could be put right and rifles choked with mud thoroughly

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cleaned with boiling water, dried and oiled. During the dry spell communication trenches had been dug, the firing-line trenches greatly improved, and support trenches made. No sand-bags or revetting materials of any kind were yet available, but of course the frost was just as good whilst it held.

Two companies of the 5th Black Watch were attached to us early in December and I was ordered to give them turns in the trenches. First of all I put one company into the "Port Arthur" section with, as I thought, full instructions as to what their duties were. But next morning on visiting this section I found the Scotties digging like beavers; they had deepened the trenches by about a foot, and so struck the greensand and water, had entirely cut away the fire-step and heightened the parapet by more than a foot. They were now some eight feet below ground and as happy as birds. I was not, being rather depressed about the irreparable damage they had, with the best of intentions, achieved. I said to the officer in command: "How do you propose to repel an attack when you can't see from, or fire over, the parapet?" To which he undauntedly replied: "Oh! we'll get on the top."

People who were in the trenches generally wanted to get out, whilst those who were out wanted to get in; in the latter category I include the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, who begged so hard of the Divisional Commander to be allowed to have a turn in the trenches that eventually one squadron was sent down to me to put into "A" lines, and I posted the squadron to the left section, which was looked upon as the easiest and safest. To my surprise the squadron was accompanied by the Colonel (Wickham) and the Adjutant (Lowther). There was only one small officers' dug-out, capable of

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holding perhaps two small men, and all the officers of this squadron appeared to be well over six-footers. Anyhow I could not see any point in the colonel of a regiment being there; with the best intentions he could only be a detriment to the exercise of command by the squadron commander. Nothing I could say, however, would deter Wickham from going into the trenches that night, as he stoutly maintained that his duty was to be with his men. Next morning early I found him plastered with mud and thoroughly wet through, so insisted on him going back to breakfast at my head-quarters. Having got him there, and got his kit dry, I firmly ruled that he should not go back to the trenches, except to visit his squadron, which he could do twice by day and once by night, as he liked. Very reluctantly he had perforce to agree to this procedure. The Northamptonshire Yeomanry consisted of a particularly fine body of men and the work in the trenches during its three days' stay was in all respects excellent.

One of the houses in Neuve Chapelle (the one near which Dilworth had been killed) was annoying us a good deal; the windows, looking into a part of our trench line, had been barricaded and loop-holed, and the German snipers from this position were almost dangerous. I asked that the artillery should knock it down, and eventually sent up a party to drag an 18-pounder during the night to a position about 1,600 yards from the offending house. Orders were issued to clear the trenches in that particular area before daybreak, and I went to point out the house to the gunners. The range was taken, and I think it was 1,550 yards; the officer in command took up his observation position on a corn-stack and ordered the gun to fire one round at 1,800. This disappeared into the blue, and the range

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was brought down by 50 yards at a time until 1,550 was reached; at that range the chimney was knocked off, and three more shots were then fired, which, a chimney no longer existing, passed over the house. From the bottom of the ladder I suggested a range of 1,500, but it appeared that by this time five more than the allotted number of rounds had been fired; nothing more could be done and the house still remained standing. I suppose it had been a bit shaken, because next day when we turned four machine-guns on it, to try to undercut it, we brought most of it down. These Neuve Chapelle houses were a nuisance in this way; we lost amongst others a very good O.T.C. officer, named Smalley, by a shot from a loop-holed window, and but for a very stout cigarette case in my breast pocket I should also have paid the debt of nature, as it was I only got a slight flesh-wound which did not worry me.

Lascelles had asked to be relieved from "A" lines and at the same time I was given the option of a change. But I said that if anyone could hold "A" lines, the Sherwood Foresters could, and declined. Nicholson with the East Lancashire replaced the Worcesters and co-operation was improved thereby. Lascelles, who was very far from fit, did not stay long, being shortly invalided to England. On Christmas Eve the Germans declared a truce and a certain amount of fraternization took place with the East Lancashire, who were then in the trenches. Dilworth's and Walters's bodies were brought in and handed over to the East Lancashire, who kindly brought them down to the Headquarters, where we reverently buried them in the orchard.

I have said that the tour in the trenches lasted three days; the relieved regiment then became alternately Brigade Reserve at the "Red Barn" or Divisional

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Reserve at Estaires. When at the last-named place the men all got a hot bath and change of underclothing, thanks to the excellent arrangements made by the Divisional Staff. In Brigade Reserve the best we could do was to get the men's clothes dried and brushed. I always gave the Battalion twenty-four hours to get cleaned up and then expected to find every man's equipment and clothing clean and smart. Nothing, I am certain, is more conducive to healthy discipline than the maintenance of soldierly smartness. When I went home on a few days' leave in January I was horrified to see soldiers walking about the London streets in clothes still plastered with the mud of France.

I have alluded to the Christmas fraternization, and before relieving the East Lancashire, on the night of Christmas Day, I cautioned all my company commanders against allowing such a thing. I told them that if the Germans came out of their trenches next morning they were to be warned that if they did not get under cover they would be fired on ; if that warning was not sufficient, a few shots were to be fired over their heads, and that if that was ineffectual, they were to be fired on.

Next morning out came the Boches. They protested loudly on being told to get back into their trenches, and it needed some shots fired over their heads to make them finally realize that we were in earnest. I was glad I had given such orders, because that day almost similar instructions came from Army Headquarters.

The kindnesses that the Regiment received from high and low, young and old, in our two counties (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) were very touching, and every time we came out of the trenches I had to write many letters of thanks to donors of gifts to the men, sometimes to school children who had devoted their Saturday

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pennies to the purpose—or perhaps to some poor old woman who had sent a pair of socks and spent her all on the wool. At Christmas the people of Nottingham, headed by Sir Francis Ley, sent such a wealth of things that, after distributing all the edibles and many other things, I had to take a store in Estaires in which to house the numerous articles of clothing which, if then distributed, could only have been wasted.

In the latter part of December the frost disappeared in a rapid thaw followed by heavy and continuous rain. The sides of the trenches fell in, in great slabs of rain-soaked clay, traverses collapsed, and the small number of sand-bags we were able to obtain were as a drop in the ocean. Communication trenches filled with water, the sides fell in and they became serious obstacles to reliefs. The ground contained by the raised roads became a morass of adhesive clay, in which men sank up to their knees and had, in many cases, to be dug and dragged out.

All the ditches filled with water, and the Rivière des Layes, finding its course blocked by the Port Arthur parapet, formed a lake outside. The pressure of water eventually burst the parapet, and inside the swirling water overwhelmed all the remnants of the trench system; it then forced its way into its natural course, viz. "A" lines trenches. When the water first began to percolate into Port Arthur, Nicholson sent to the Field Company R.E. for pumps, and these were sent, accompanied by some sappers, but when the parapet burst and the water rushed in, the pumps were submerged in the flood.

The following day, we having meanwhile relieved the East Lancs. and occupied odds and ends of the flooded trenches, I received an urgent message from the O.C.

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Field Company asking for his pumps to be returned at once. My answer was probably rather short and to the effect that I did not know where his pumps were and that, if he wanted them urgently, he had better send down his own men to fish them out. The C.R.E. complained to the G.O.C. Division, and two days later I got a rap over the knuckles. At a conference at our Brigade Headquarters, General Davis said: "Before we start, gentlemen, I wish you all to understand that I insist on harmony being maintained amongst all units of the Division. The other day the sappers very kindly lent their pumps to assist the infantry and when they asked for them back the answer they got was: 'Fetch your own bloody pumps.'" I at once got up and said: "I really did not use those words, sir." To which he replied: "No! but you meant them"—and I could not deny the impeachment. After all, the sappers were living in comparative comfort and I did not see why my men, with no prospect of getting dry for three days, should go diving for pumps of whose exact whereabouts they were ignorant.

Early in January I went home on a few days' leave and found my wife much improved in health though still far from being her old self. It was a pleasant change from the trenches, but for the life of me I could not have stayed more than a very few days away; it somehow seemed wrong to be walking about in safety and comfort when one knew what a rotten time one's officers and men were having in France. On the return journey I met Beck, late of my own regiment, but by that time a distinguished officer in the Flying Corps, who took me in a motor to Estaires, thus saving me a tiresome journey by train. From there I found my way to the Red Barn and next day it was our turn for the trenches.

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About this time we had the great misfortune to lose the services of Wright, our super-excellent quartermaster, who was invalided, much to the regret of every officer and man in the Battalion. Douglas got a smack on the head from a bullet which, though it hardly inflicted a wound, rendered him *hors de combat*. Bobby Hodgson also got a neat parting made in his hair by a grazing bullet, but was seemingly no worse for it. Casualties throughout the Battalion increased in proportion to the difficulties of relief over the exposed ground, now an absolute quagmire.

One day, on the road near "A" lines headquarters I came across a corporal with a broken-down motor-cycle and recognized Webster, of the Bombay Light Horse, one of the motor-cyclist volunteers from Bombay. In conversation I asked him whether he would not like to take a commission, and, on his assenting, whether he would like to come to my Battalion. He replied: "Very much"; so I sent in a formal application and he was eventually commissioned and posted to the Battalion. I never saw him again, but know that he was ultimately killed in 1918 as a Lieut.-Colonel commanding our 16th Battalion and, in addition to his rapid promotion, was the possessor of a D.S.O. and M.C. —a wonderful record!

Many sand-bags and other revetting material had by this time come along, but even with such aids our trenches could only be occupied in bits, and a round of inspection of the lines in the daytime was quite an adventure. One had to reach the trenches by a cautious approach ending in a sharp sprint, then, having seen as much as one could by wading, one had to get out at the back of the trench and race for another occupied portion and so on. Eventually it was decided to build breast-

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works in rear of the trenches. Sheets of corrugated iron, posts, and sand-bags were supplied and, every night and all night long, half the men worked with these, whilst the other half remained in position to repel an attack. I used to go down each night to superintend, and marvelled that the Germans did not open a hail of fire on the working parties; they were so close that they must have heard every sound, besides which in the morning the results of the previous night's work was each day apparent to them. However, by the grace of God they did not and the works were eventually completed; though I doubt if they were of any more comfort, or protection, to the men.

During my last tour in "A" lines I got a message from General Carter telling me that I had been appointed to command a brigade of the 29th Division and had been ordered to proceed home at once. He very kindly added that it gave him great pleasure to be able to announce this although at the same time he was very sorry indeed to part with me. General Davis also sent me warm messages of congratulation and regret. I finished my final tour in the trenches in France, issued a short farewell order to the Battalion I loved, handed over command to Mortimore, and departed for London to report myself at the War Office.

The story of how I came to be appointed a Brigadier is, I think, worth telling.

General "Fred" Shaw, an old friend and some years previously my commanding officer, was appointed to command the 29th Division (the last division provided by the Regular Army), and on his appointment went to interview Lord K. at the War Office. Whilst in Lord K.'s office a staff officer brought him a list of officers available as Brigadiers, so that he could choose whom he wanted.

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Shaw looked through the list and then said: "I would really have liked to have had Marshall of my own regiment, but I see his name is not on the list." The staff officer replied: "Marshall is already employed in command of a battalion of his regiment, therefore not available." Lord K. at once said: "Well, but if Shaw wants Marshall, why shouldn't he have him? Let someone else command the Battalion." And it was so!

At the War Office I was ordered to report myself to the 29th Divisional Headquarters (then at Leamington), where I found yet another Forester, and former commanding officer, in Wolley Dod, who had been appointed G.S.O. of the 29th Division. Thus began my career as one of this famous Division. My own Brigade (87th) I found was in billets, and mobilizing, at Rugby.

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CHAPTER IV

WITH THE 29TH DIVISION

ON arrival at Rugby I found the Brigade Major (Captain and Brevet Major Lucas, Royal Berkshire Regiment) had already arranged the billets and the preliminaries of mobilization. Not only that, but he had secured from the Headmaster of Rugby School permission to use the school range, and from kindly and patriotic landowners and tenants the right to train and manœuvre over their property; whilst the Corporation had allotted us a piece of waste land in which to practise trenching. Lucas was, in fact, an ideal staff officer, capable, determined, and cheery under all circumstances.

The Brigade Headquarters were at an hotel, in which also lived the C.O. and officers of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, afterwards affectionately known as "The Skins." Two other battalions of the Brigade were also billeted in Rugby, viz. The King's Own Scottish Borderers and The Border Regiment, whilst the fourth battalion, The South Wales Borderers, was in billets at Coventry.

The inhabitants of Rugby and the soldiers were mutually pleased with each other. I fancy the former had never before had the experience of regular soldiers in their midst and, like most of the rural population of England, were at first just a little timid about the possible behaviour of the "licentious soldiery." The men, however, behaved, as I have always found soldiers do, like

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little gentlemen. During the whole time I was in Rugby I never saw a drunken soldier. They kept the billets clean and in their spare time helped their hostesses in the rougher household duties; whilst the children, as always, loved them.

It was a Border Brigade, composed of well-trained, very fine regiments with great traditions behind them, and, as I realized later to the full, not a weak spot in it. Casson commanded the S.W.B.; Sladen the K.O.S.B.; Jones the R.I.F.; and Home the Borders. The other units of the 87th Brigade were territorials; O'Hagan commanding the Field Ambulance; Phillips the signallers; whilst the provost staff was in the charge of a capital man named Broadhurst, an ex-gunner sergeant. It remained then for me to appoint a Staff Captain and a Brigade Machine-gun Officer. For the first appointment Casson was good enough to let me have Petre, a really first-rate fellow in every respect, hard-working, resourceful, and, under all conditions, bubbling over with the joy of life. For the second appointment Jones kindly let me have Edden, also a capital fellow.

Both Lucas and I had had a certain amount of experience in France, so were able to pass it on to the battalions in the Brigade; though the S.W.B. had already been in the war, having co-operated with the Japanese in the capture of Tsingtau from the Germans. Mobilization was, as in the case of the 8th Division, somewhat slow, but, being in billets, the men were decidedly better off than they would have been ploughing about in the mud of Hursley Park or elsewhere in camp. I managed to get some very nice horses, as chargers, through Mr. George Miller, who was managing a remount depot, and I have always regretted the fate

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of those fine horses, blown to pieces by shell-fire on the Gallipoli beaches.

One could hardly be at Rugby and not hunt, even though one could not hunt Government chargers, so, finding a kindred spirit in O'Sullivan, of the Skins, we hired from some stables in Rugby and proceeded out to a Pytchley Wednesday meet. Thinking the meet was at the usual hour of 11 a.m., we arrived there an hour too soon and went into the local inn to await the arrival of the hounds. The landlady demurred to our request for liquid refreshment, in the shape of cherry-brandy, saying that orders were very strict and that she was not allowed to serve soldiers in uniform. However, just then two very charming ladies came in, who turned out to be the wife and sister-in-law of an old friend of mine—Paul Kenna, and they took us over to their house, a few hundred yards away, where we were hospitably entertained. It was very wonderful to see the Pytchley field during this first year of the war. Lady Lowther was master, in place of her husband who was serving with the Northamptonshire Yeomanry in France; the total of followers did not amount to more than forty, instead of the usual 400, and the majority of these were ladies. There was a good deal of wire left standing in the country, but at least there was plenty of room to ride and we enjoyed an excellent though not an outstanding day's sport.

After this I began to go out regularly, so far as my duties would permit; and thanks to the very great kindness of that most hospitable of ladies, Mrs. Arthur James, who mounted me on many occasions, I was able really to enjoy days with other well-known packs, such as Mr. Fernie's and the Atherstone. I took rooms in Rugby, where my wife joined me and, thanks to the

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hospitality shown us, we had a very enjoyable time during which the war seemed very distant.

Every day, after mobilization was complete, we expected to be starting for France, but gradually a rumour got round that we were to be sent to the Dardanelles; where the Royal Navy had attempted, single-handed, to force the straits, on two separate occasions—and failed. The rumour gradually became a certainty, and, though supposed to be an official secret, the fact became well known; not only to those concerned, but to the general public, owing to a very ill-advised press publicity.

Whilst we were still at Rugby, Koe of the K.O.S.B. came back from sick leave and replaced Sladen in command. To our very great regret General Shaw left us. He was succeeded in command by General Hunter-Weston; presumably because Hunter-Weston was a fluent French scholar and we were to act in close concert with the French during this adventure.

Before finally leaving we had the honour of being inspected by and marching past His Majesty the King. As the old man in the *Punch* picture said: "There being no sootable field so to speak," the Division was formed up, for His Majesty's inspection, on the fine old coaching road running through Dunchurch, and afterwards we marched past, the infantry in double fours (eight abreast) with bayonets fixed. As I turned in to the saluting base, beside the King, and watched my Brigade go past, I thrilled with pride at my good fortune in being in command of such a splendid body of men and prayed inwardly that they might never be sacrificed unnecessarily through any fault of mine.

Shortly after His Majesty's inspection the 29th Division was moved by train, to embark at Avonmouth

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in a splendid flotilla of ships, of a very different class from those which had conveyed the first Indian Expeditionary Force to France. Our departure was the signal for the papers to proclaim our destination to all the world and to hail us as " Modern Crusaders " and " The cream of the British Army."

For a force destined to land eventually, as an invading army, on a hostile shore, the system of embarkation left much to be desired. Guns were embarked on one ship, men and horses on another, machine guns were separated from their natural corollary the mules. Technical troops were separated from their affiliated units; in fact every canon of good staff work was conspicuous by its absence, but on whom the responsibility rested I know not. The 87th Brigade Headquarters with the K.O.S.B. and other details embarked on a British India boat and next evening the convoy started, escorted by quite an imposing naval escort.

It was essential to keep the troops fit and in hard condition, so a regular course was laid out round and through the ship; this involved ascending and descending rope ladders, let down into the lowest holds. To enable every man to compete, these exercises had to be got through quickly, and to do the round three times in full marching order, with a rifle and 200 rounds of ammunition, was a strenuous performance.

I believe the intention was to land at Malta, in order to disembark and redistribute the Division amongst the transports in a manner more suited to the special circumstances, but Lord Methuen pointed out how very unsuitable the terrain of Malta was for this purpose, and, knowing the island, I thoroughly agree. However, we called in at Valetta and officers were allowed to go ashore for a time.

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There I renewed old acquaintances, with José, the Club hall porter; with Black Saliba, well known in the polo and racing world of Malta, and with many others. I met, and lunched with, General J. S. S. Barker, my old column leader of South African days, and then commanding the artillery in the island—altogether a pleasant break in the voyage. It was strange to see Valetta harbour occupied by the French Navy, and both officers and men were apparently having a very pleasant and easy time. From here Sladen left for France to assume command of the regular battalion K.O.S.B. in that theatre.

Malta having failed as a re-sorting station, we perforce continued on our way and put into the fine harbour at Alexandria, where all personnel, animals, guns, stores, etc., were disembarked. The infantry of the Division marched out to Mex, a salty dust-heap, where roads were being hurriedly made by Egyptian labour and water was just being laid on. The march to our camping ground was about five miles and very hot and dusty the road, or lack of it, was; indeed a man in the ranks was heard to declare in no uncertain voice that: "The cream of the British Army is getting blanky well curdled."

General Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been appointed to the command of the forces destined for the Dardanelles, had preceded the 29th Division to Egypt and was busily engaged with his staff in making his plans for co-operation with the Royal Navy and the complete reorganization of the forces entrusted to his charge. I must here interpolate that Sir Ian was still without an administrative staff. These forces included not only the 29th Division, but an Australian and New Zealand Corps under General Birdwood; as well as a

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French Corps composed almost entirely of Colonial troops such as Foreign Legion and Senegalese under General d'Amade.

I was sorry not to be able to see my brother, a judge of the Egyptian Court of Appeal, during our stay, but found that he was away on Assizes. However, part of a letter from him is perhaps worth quoting :

" I don't know of course exactly what you are going to do, but the Turks must have a million men now under arms and can easily raise that number to 3,000,000 ; so if you are going to attack Turkey you will want at least half a million men to start with and another half-million to follow."

I quote this extract from memory because it really was quite a sound summing-up of the situation.

Of the camp at Mex nothing much remains in my memory except that we got hold of some boats and practised the men in rowing and landing on the open beach ; that we were inspected by Sir Ian Hamilton ; that some of us went to a race meeting at Alexandria ; and that Edden, who ran our mess, gave us bullock's kidney for breakfast.

We re-embarked on 8th April with everything in its proper place this time. The 87th Brigade Headquarters was detailed to the s.s. *Aragon*, along with Divisional Headquarters and the South Wales Borderers, so through the Ægean to Mudros Harbour.

I must now digress to affairs in France.

Just as we started on the voyage, which ultimately brought us to Mudros, a battle took place in France hailed by our daily papers " as the glorious victory of Neuve Chapelle," and at the first blush I sent con-

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gratulatory messages to my late Divisional and Brigade Commanders. Later reports, however, showed me that so far from being a victory the action had failed to secure any tactical advantage and the losses had been appalling.

I had, whilst in France, made out an appreciation of the situation so far as an offensive in our immediate front was concerned, and had come to the conclusion that the only tactical objective worth gaining was the Aubers Ridge. To gain this objective, and hold it, would necessitate the employment of four divisions in the attack and four in reserve, the latter to clinch the victory and eventually hold the ridge.

I am not quite clear how many divisions were employed in the actual attack, but I think three, or at the most four. At first, in spite of very heavy casualties, largely due to the uncut wire entanglements through which the troops had to make their way, good progress was made. Then there was some hitch; the German reserves came on the scene, but ours did not until too late. Our men were forced back, not indeed to their original positions, but when the battle ended we had gained nothing worth fighting for and, as I have already said, our losses had been very heavy indeed.

Amongst the officers in my old Battalion I had lost many dear friends and comrades; Mortimore had been badly wounded—Hodgson, Dixon, Stranger and others killed, Webbe and Morley wounded, whilst the casualties amongst the rank and file had been equally severe.

We reached the noble harbour of Mudros, so far as the majority of the transports were concerned, without any untoward incident, but there was an exception.

In spite of the close blockade at the mouth of the Dardanelles a small Turkish torpedo boat had slipped

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out. In broad daylight, about 8 a.m., this torpedo boat came alongside a transport, which had on board a brigade of field artillery, and from a distance of about fifty yards the captain hailed the transport. He intimated that he would allow the troops ten minutes in which to take to the boats, after which he would sink the vessel.

Unfortunately there were no officers of the brigade on deck at the time and the men made a dash for the boats to lower them from the davits. The result of inexperience and confusion was that some of the boats fell into the water whilst others stuck irretrievably. A number of men jumped into the water, some of whom were killed by boats which fell on them.

Not really allowing the ten minutes stipulated for, the Turkish captain discharged his first torpedo, but I fancy he could not have been an expert, because at that very short range the torpedo dived under the ship and missed. By that time the O.C. Brigade had reached the deck and succeeded in restoring order. The Turk discharged yet another torpedo with the same result, and then, being alarmed by smoke on the horizon, made off with all speed. A number of the men who had jumped overboard were rescued and complete order had been restored, when back came the Turk and fired another torpedo with exactly the same results. He then fled for good, but this time pursued by our own destroyers, and eventually ran his boat ashore on one of the islands, where it was broken up by our shell-fire.

Immediately on arrival in Mudros harbour, General Hunter-Weston, accompanied by Wolley-Dod and others of his staff, went off to see Sir Ian Hamilton and Admiral de Robeck, leaving me in temporary charge.

Amongst the staff of the 29th Division was one

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Captain Von Bettelheim, commonly called "Beetle," who held the position of Turkish interpreter. The son of an Austrian nobleman and having a Turkish mother, "Beetle" was one of the adventurous spirits of this world. He had been at one time head of the Turkish police in Constantinople and in every recent war he had served in some capacity, on one side or the other, quite impartially. In the South African War he had served with the British against the Boers, in the Italo-Turkish War he had fought on the side of the Turks and Arabs in Tripoli. I mention all this because it may help to excuse my subsequent action.

During the afternoon I had arranged to go ashore with Lucas and a few other officers, when "Beetle" approached me with the request that I would include him in the party, as he wished to question the local inhabitants. Well! I was aware that he had seen all the plans for the landings on Gallipoli, and, quite wrongly of course, I felt that his antecedents would not permit one to trust him, so I made the excuse that the boat was already filled.

We duly went ashore, without "Beetle," to whom I here tender my most humble apologies, and amongst other matters stretched our legs and saw our G.O.C.-in-C. (Sir Ian Hamilton) taking his customary afternoon stroll, at the rate of about six miles an hour, hotly pursued by two A.D.C.s, whilst, about a quarter of a mile behind, his armed escort was moving at the double and in danger of collapse from heat and exhaustion.

During our stay at Mudros General Hunter-Weston took his own staff and heads of formations (including his three Infantry Brigadiers, Hare, Napier, and myself, with our respective Brigade-Majors, Frankland, Costeker, and Lucas) for a reconnaissance of the Gallipoli penin-

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sula, on board a cruiser commanded by Captain Kelly, R.N., kindly allotted by the naval C.-in-C. for the purpose. We certainly saw no enemy, but the impression left on my mind was that a division was too small a force and would be lost in the extent of ground covered by the various projected landing-places.

Preparations for the actual landing operations went on, but these mostly concerned the Royal Navy[1] and the higher staffs; we, of the humbler formations, could do little except continue the efforts to keep our men fit and train them in rowing and boat work generally.

Orders for the landing were issued, from which it was seen that the 29th Division was to make landings at five different points as shown in the rough sketch opposite.

General Hare with the 86th Brigade was to provide the covering forces for the landings at "V," "W," and "X." Colonel Casson was to land in Morto Bay, at "S," with three companies of his S.W.B. Colonel Matthews, Royal Marines, was placed in command of a mixed force consisting of the K.O.S.B., the remaining company of the S.W.B., and a weak battalion of Royal Marines to make good the landing at "Y." Beach working parties were to be supplied for all beaches by the Royal Naval Division. The landing was to take place at daybreak by the express desire of the Naval C.-in-C.

The information at the disposal of Expeditionary Force Headquarters led Sir Ian Hamilton to infer that

[1] One of these preparations was getting an ex-collier known as the *River Clyde* prepared for the quick landing of troops at "V" beach. Large sally ports were cut in her sides and it was hoped that by running her on the beach, troops would be able to emerge through these and get on shore more rapidly than would be possible by tows in open boats.

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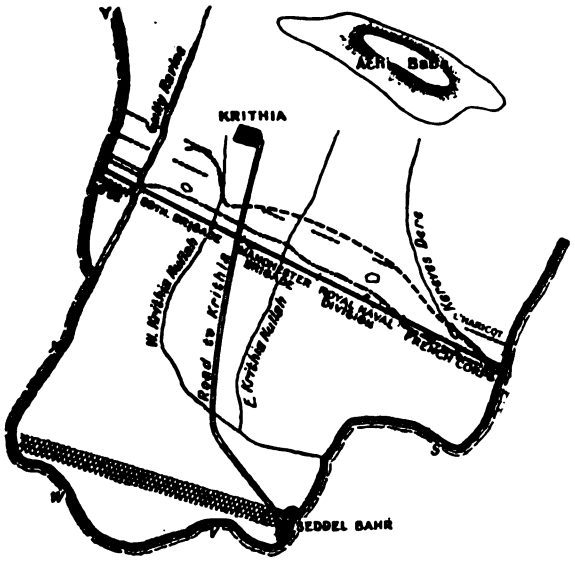

6TH JUNE, 1915

the landing might be opposed by about one Turkish division.

On the evening of 23rd April General Hunter-Weston gave an address to all the senior officers of his Division, in which he stated, amongst many other things, that the weight and *moral*, as well as material effect, of the naval preliminary bombardment would astonish the world, and especially the Turk to such an extent that his resistance would be paralysed. In fact I think we, most of us, gathered from his lecture that we could hardly hope to come to grips with the Turks much before we had reached Constantinople. That same day, however, our Divisional Commander had issued a special order of the day detailing all sorts of horrible deaths we might incur during and after landing, i.e. drowning

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—blown up by mines in the sea—ditto by land mines, etc.. etc. He considered that to be forewarned was to be forearmed; but one, at least, of the after-results of this order was quite funny—of this later.

The order was known throughout the Division as "Hunter-Weston's life insurance policy." He was himself a most courageous man, and none of these possibly horrible deaths had any terrors for him, but the ordinary person is not really a hero because he is in uniform, and I cannot help thinking that a happy state of ignorance until the end comes is better for him.

But to continue the dispositions. General Napier with the 88th Brigade was to land at "V" and "W" and, forming up his Brigade, push forward to a selected line running across the Peninsula, with "Y" beach as the left of it. The 87th Brigade (less S.W.B. and K.O.S.B.) was to land at "X" beach and form the Divisional Reserve. This reserve was to be kept in hand in order eventually to pass through the 88th Brigade and occupy the dominating position of Achi Baba that evening. A portion of the French Corps d'Armée, under General d'Amade, was to land at Kum Kale in order to keep "Asiatic Annie" and her satellites from interfering with the landings at the toe of the Peninsula. General Birdwood's Corps was to land, *before daybreak*, in the vicinity of Gaba Tepe.

Various criticisms, or queries, spring to the mind in connection with these combined naval and military operations.

The first is that in any case of combined operations there should be *one* commander-in-chief to co-ordinate the whole. However well the C.-in-C. of the Army gets on with the C.-in-C. of the Royal Navy, or vice versa, real co-ordination can never be the same as under

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one head; one had always understood that the Crimea proved that to the hilt.

Secondly, there can be little doubt that, whatever the difficulties, the covering troops should have been landed *before* daybreak.

Thirdly, the hour selected for the landing was the very worst that could have been chosen. At that hour the sun was in such a position (low in the east) that it shone straight into the eyes of the attackers and enabled the defence to see everything to the best advantage.

Fourthly, why was it not known by our naval and military experts that naval gun-fire was powerless against simple land defences?

Fifthly, why, when we had aeroplanes, was no close reconnaissance of the enemy's positions carried out by military observers, and sketches, or photographs, made of their defences and dispositions?

Sixthly, why did our War Office Intelligence Department produce, and issue, for the use of the landing force, such thoroughly inaccurate, and carelessly printed, maps of the Gallipoli Peninsula? It was not until a map printed in Austria, and found on the person of a dead Turkish officer, had been copied and reproduced that anyone could definitely state where he was on the ground.

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CHAPTER V

THE GALLIPOLI LANDING

THE day of the great adventure eventually arrived and on the evening of 24th April 87th Brigade Headquarters, with the two remaining battalions (R. Innis. Fusiliers and Border Regiment), were packed into a cruiser and during the night steamed slowly towards the Peninsula.

The sea was like glass, and shortly after daybreak we had arrived close enough to hear the booms and crashes of the naval bombardment.

Approaching "X" beach everything seemed to be at peace; the beach party was quietly at work and H.M.S. *Implacable*, standing close-in, was no longer using her guns. Brigade Headquarters went ashore in the first tow, and, instead of the expected struggle through the water to gain the shore, I walked down a plank, courteously assisted by a bluejacket, and landed dry-shod.

On gaining the top of the low cliff I found a company of the Royal Fusiliers, whose commander informed me that they had landed without opposition; that his C.O. (Col. Newenham) had gone to the right with two companies to clear some sand-hills of a few Turks and connect up with the covering force (Lancashire Fusiliers) at "W" beach; that the remaining company was reconnoitring to the front; and that he had been left in reserve.

I asked him whether any arrangements had been

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made to form a bridgehead in order to protect the landing-place, to which he replied "No." Whilst still talking to him I noted that the reconnoitring company seemed to be somewhat heavily engaged with the enemy, and an orderly appeared carrying a note from the O.C. that company, asking for reinforcements, stating that he was heavily engaged and that the Turks were getting round his left flank. I told the O.C. Reserve that he had better push out and reinforce, and that I would take over the defence of the landing.

I then sent for Colonel Home (O.C. Border Regt.), but, as he was busily engaged, Brevet Lieut.-Colonel Vaughan (2nd in command) came instead. I pointed out the position to him and asked him to get two companies of his battalion lined up under cover of the edge of the cliff, with bayonets fixed, ready to move out. This was done; but meanwhile we saw parties of the Royal Fusiliers gradually retiring, followed by parties of Turks, and the fire was increasing in intensity.

A ragged volley fired by the Turks had fatal effects; the gallant Vaughan, shot through the brain, pitched over the cliff, whilst several bullets grazed me, though only one actually caused a flesh wound.

Just then the retirement of the Fusiliers developed into a rapid retreat closely followed by the Turks. The latter having got within 120 yards, I ordered the Borders to charge, and over the cliff-edge they went with ringing cheers. The enemy fired heavily, causing some 50 casualties, but, not waiting for the bayonet, they fled in every direction as soon as our men got within 50 yards or so. The Borders then occupied some old Turkish trenches.

Pending further orders and information from the Division, I thought it best to form a bridgehead to protect

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"X" beach. The remnants of the two companies of Royal Fusiliers were dispatched to join up with Colonel Newenham, and in addition a company of the Borders was sent, at his request, to reinforce him in his attempt to link up with "W." The Inniskillings and the remainder of the Borders set to work to make the bridgehead, part of which was to consist of the old Turkish trenches, reversed.

This work was in progress when a man of the Borders came in carrying a dead tortoise, discovered in one of the trenches, and said: "I've found one of these here land-mines, sir." (*Vide* "The life insurance policy.")

The signallers meanwhile tried to get into communication with "Y" but without success, though we had received an early message from that beach to say that the landing there had also been unopposed.

The day dragged on with no information as to the progress of the landings at "S," "V," or "W"; although at the last-named we could see parties of our men making gallant, and eventually successful, attempts to cut the high wire entanglement (shown on rough sketch).

Heavy firing had started at "Y" and I was very much tempted to move in that direction, but my hands were tied; because, being Divisional Reserve, I felt it incumbent to keep the force intact, pending an order from the Division. Besides, one never knows. "X" was now secure from any attack and, if all the other landings proved to be failures, everything might have to be transferred there.

The fact is, in war, original orders should never go beyond the first stage, eventualities should not be discounted.

My impression is that the orders for the landings

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should have been confined to the covering troops; the remainder should have been kept in reserve to exploit success in any particular area. The correct employment of reserves is always to exploit success or cover failure.

Eventually I got a message through to the Division, suggesting that my force should move to the assistance of " Y," where the sounds of heavy firing led me to infer that this isolated landing was being heavily attacked, at the same time pointing out that such a move would leave " X " unprotected. But " the shades of eve were falling fast " before an answer was received, and this directed me to remain in my present position for the night.

Meanwhile, failing to get any touch with " Y." by signal, I had sent out patrols, along the beach, to get into communication, but these failed to get through.

That night was an anxious one for me; not from any trouble at " X," where there was little or no firing, but from the uncertainty of the whole situation. Firing seemed to be general at all the other beaches, rising to a perfect crescendo at " Y," and I greatly feared that my poor K.O.S.B., and S.W.B. Company, were being overwhelmed. However, one must sleep sometimes; so cutting myself a bed of lavender, which was growing there in profusion, and with a warm Burberry as a coverlet, I eventually slept soundly, in spite of pain from my wound and a gnawing anxiety about the battalions of my brigade, so widely separated from us at " S " and " Y."

Day dawned at last and with the dawn came a fresh crash of naval bombardment directed at Seddel Bahr. Gradually news came through; the landing had been

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established at " W " ; the troops from " Y " had been evacuated after suffering heavy casualties, including the Colonel of the K.O.S.B. (Koe), killed and the second-in-command badly wounded.

" S," so far as the actual landing was concerned, had been a complete success, due very largely to the spirited action of Captain Davidson, R.N. (H.M.S. *Cornwallis*), who took very great risks, and I rather think disobeyed his Admiral's orders, to ensure the safe landing of the S.W.B. (To Captain Davidson, his officers and ship's company, I here record my admiration, and gratitude, for their action.)

The French had landed successfully at Kum Kale, and occupied the attention of the Turkish forces on the Asiatic side of the Straits.

Birdwood, with his Australians and New Zealanders, had gained the shore, not indeed at Gaba Tepe, but at a cove some 2½ miles north-east of this point ; known to fame later as Anzac. But the situation there was not a very hopeful one.

" V " Beach, including Seddel Bahr and the old fort there, was still held by the Turks.

A furious naval bombardment took place, then heavy rifle-fire. About noon we saw some Turks running back, and eventually our own men appeared on the ramparts of the old fort and opened fire on the retreating Turks, so we realized that the landing had now been successfully accomplished at " V."

On the 27th April, with " X " as the pivot, a line was established across the toe of the Peninsula. The French force had successfully withdrawn from Kum Kale and landed at " V." The S.W.B. from " S " and the K.O.S.B. from " Y " rejoined the 87th Brigade. I was the only surviving Infantry Brigadier of the Division ; Napier

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and his Brigade Major had been killed; Hare had been severely wounded and his Brigade Major killed.

Pending the arrival of General d'Amade, General Hunter-Weston was left in command of all the troops (French and British) in the Helles area. It devolved therefore on me to assume command (temporarily) of the 29th Division, and for this purpose I handed over command of the Brigade to Casson and proceeded to "W" beach, where Divisional Headquarters were established.

Orders for an advance on the following day (28th) were received from General Headquarters. The French were to advance with their right on the Dardanelles and the 29th, with their left on the Ægean, were to keep touch with them.

So far as 29th Division Orders are concerned I can only remember that two brigades (87th and 88th) formed the firing line and supports and one brigade (86th) was in reserve. The advance duly started about 9.30 a.m. supported by naval gun-fire and seemed for a time to be getting on well, so much so that I was thinking of moving Divisional Headquarters farther forward, when about 11 a.m. General Hunter-Weston came ashore and said that General d'Amade had arrived in the area and so he was now resuming command of his Division.

Instead of my rejoining my Brigade, General Hunter-Weston sent me forward to push the attack of the Division. He gave me a temporary staff consisting of Festing of the Borders, d'Apici of the Gunners, Braine of the Munsters, and Adrian Keyes, R.N. I had now become a sort of battle policeman.

Firing at the front had increased in intensity and a message came in from the acting Brigadier of 88th Brigade asking for more ammunition. This was sent forward by men from the Reserve Brigade. The attack-

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ing line was both thin and lacking in depth, so it was not long before the Reserve became absorbed in the firing-line.

Going with my staff towards the front, we came on a deep nullah, the W. Krithia Nullah, which ran transversely across the line of advance. This was full of men, and I had some difficulty in persuading them to leave its friendly cover and push on. Eventually, we got these refugees forward, but (well, most of the men had been without sleep for forty-eight hours or more and were physically and mentally exhausted, so there was every excuse) soon we had the mortification of seeing parties of men running back from the firing-line.

Except Braine, who had solemnly asked leave to fall out to get a bullet extracted from his head, my staff and I moved on. When I reached 87th Brigade Headquarters, Casson told me that his men on the left were held up and had had very severe casualties. I gave orders for the left to be at once reinforced and pushed on at all and every cost.

Lucas took the order, and was on his way to the extreme left when Adrian Keyes, who had been watching developments on the right, ran down the hill to tell me that the troops on the right were retiring. A messenger was sent to recall Lucas and the order given was held in abeyance until I had seen for myself what the actual situation was.

The situation was as bad as it well could be; the whole of the French troops were retiring; the 88th Brigade was conforming to this retrograde movement, as also were two battalions of the 86th Brigade. Only the 87th Brigade and two battalions of the 86th (Royal Fusiliers and Lancashire Fusiliers) were still attacking. What was to be done? Although the Turks were firing hard I felt fairly certain that we only had a rear-guard

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against us. But the precipitate retirement on the right had ruined what otherwise might have been a great success, and I was left with one and a half brigades of worn-out troops. Under the circumstances I thought the only thing to do was to lay out the best line possible, between the sea on the left and the Krithia Nullah on the right, and dig in. The most forward parties of the 86th and 87th had reached the outskirts of Krithia and these had perforce to be withdrawn. Until dusk fell the enemy kept up a heavy fire, especially with his artillery; after that, silence—the Turks had gone. The day was won and yet lost.

I then went back and found the Brigadier of the 88th Brigade; told him what the situation was and that he must bring his Brigade forward and prolong the line. He replied that this was impossible, his men were worn out and could not do it. Taking him with me, I went over to a body of men and said: "Look here, men; the ground in front of you has to be gained either to-night or to-morrow, would you rather go forward now and dig in, or wait and cross the same ground again to-morrow." The answer was prompt: "Go forward now, sir." I turned to the Brigadier and said in a low voice: "There is your answer."

I then went forward again with the Brigadier, his staff and the C.O.s of Battalions, and pointed out the line I wanted them to occupy. In addition, Adrian Keyes volunteered to go over to the French and get them to conform, and this he successfully arranged. It was a miserable wet and cold night, but by daybreak next day the whole force was moderately well entrenched in what was later known as the "Eski Line." Our casualties had been heavy during the day and amongst the killed was Home (O.C. Borders).

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I spent the night with the 87th Brigade, wet through, chilled to the bone, and in a good deal of pain; even a flesh wound wants a little rest and mine was getting annoyed. Next morning, early, I went to Divisional Headquarters to give an account of my stewardship and then resumed command of my Brigade. We established Brigade Headquarters at what was known as "The Pink Farm." That day (29th) was a peaceful one and the beaches, especially "V" and "W," were quite the busiest places. The troops in the front worked away with pick and shovel to improve the line, and did so with no interference from the Turks.

I must here interpolate a note about water. Nothing was known as regards any possible supply of water on the Peninsula; in fact, our Intelligence branch at the War Office had evidently never visualized the possibility of landing troops in this particular part of the world, and knowledge of the terrain appears to have been practically nil. Accordingly G.H.Q. wisely arranged to take a supply of water from Egypt, contained in sealed petrol tins, and these tins were landed as early as possible at each beach. As far as "X" beach was concerned I do not think we ever had to call on this reserve supply, as we found water plentiful from such wells as we came across in our particular area.

From the conformation of the toe of the Peninsula (which was rather in the shape of an elongated saucer) it was certainly probable that water would be found almost anywhere by digging wells. At the actual wells in existence we found the water level to be only about six feet below the surface. In addition to the existing wells there were numerous springs in the cliffs at the edge of the Gully Ravine.

Anzac was in a different category, and there, during

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TRENCHES ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.

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the whole period of occupation, water had to be supplied to the troops (I think always from Egypt). Whilst on this subject I may say that the Suvla area, also saucer-shaped, was very well supplied (locally) with water from wells and springs, and the outcry about lack of water in the first phase of the landing there was ill-founded. At Mudros, our base, water was brought in ships, though, to my knowledge, water on the island of Lemnos was plentiful and could have been brought down to the camps and harbour by gravitation. The question of water-supply in war bulks so large that I think all officers should have a good knowledge of physical geography; indeed it might be made a compulsory subject for the entrance examination into Sandhurst.

The 30th April was again a quiet day and the unloading of guns, horses, and material was continued. The Navy did a certain amount of shelling, but the Turks remained almost quiescent.

We found that "The Pink Farm" was being used as a guiding-post for all and sundry, viz. men, horses, mules, and vehicles on their way up to the front line, with tools, stores, ammunition, etc., and, knowing what the effect would probably be, we tried in vain to keep them away from our Headquarters.

On the 1st May I had gone early in the morning to the trenches occupied by my Brigade, and found that the line was now fairly strong, though there was no wire in front of it. About 7 a.m. the enemy opened fire with their artillery, and it was evident that "The Pink Farm" was receiving more than its fair share of shells. Having completed my round of the trenches, I was returning to Brigade Headquarters when, on nearing there, I was met by Sergeant Broadhurst (Brigade Provost-Sergeant), who told me not to go near the farm-house, which the enemy

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"had got set," and that the Brigade Major had been killed. This was indeed bad news, but on proceeding a little farther I met Lucas, very much in the flesh and very cheerful. Luckily both Lucas and Petre had been out of the farm when the shelling started and, though the house was practically destroyed, the only casualty had been Lucas's servant, wounded, though not severely. My servant had been settling my valise in a corner of one of the rooms when a shell burst inside; wonderful to relate, he was not even hit by a splinter.

The enemy was aggressive with his artillery during most of the day, but there was no rifle-fire. It was just about the full of the moon. The Turks had two nights previously made a determined night attack on Anzac and had been repulsed with very heavy losses; now it was our turn. About 8.30 p.m. heavy rifle-fire opened from our trenches and a report came in that the Turks, seen against the skyline, were advancing in force. I sent back a message to all battalion commanders to keep their fire low and steady. From an order found next day it appeared that the Turkish troops had received orders to push on without firing and get home with the bayonet; but the losses they were suffering were too much for them. The forward impetus broke; they lay down and opened a heavy but ill-directed fire.

There were very few casualties amongst officers and men of the Brigade in the front line. The enemy fire was high, and at Brigade Headquarters, about eight hundred yards in rear, the bullets were dropping like hail-stones during a heavy storm. The telephone wires were soon cut, but the operators and linesmen went out at once to repair the connexions. Again and again were the wires cut, but, except for short periods, I was kept informed of happenings at the front throughout the night.

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Ammunition was called for, and not once but several times did Petre, assisted by Sergeant Broadhurst and his police, together with other volunteers, go up through the hail of bullets, with mules of the Zion Mule Corps loaded with ammunition. Each time on his return he reported everyone in front full of confidence and cheerful. I had no Brigade Reserve, but had, what was almost as good, absolute trust in the staunchness of each one of the battalions in the Brigade.

We got a message from the Division during the night to tell us that the enemy, advancing in masses down the Krithia Nullah, had broken the line at one point, but that the 5th Royal Scots in Divisional Reserve had gone in at once and redeemed the situation, so all was now well.

The continuous rattle of musketry lasted without a pause until 5.30 a.m. on 2nd May. Then General Hunter-Weston spoke on the telephone and asked me to push forward strong reconnaissances to find out whether the Turks were retreating and to make sure that they had not entrenched themselves within 600 yards of our position. Each battalion sent out strong patrols; but only on the front of the K.O.S.B. had the Turks remained within 600 yards. There about eighty of the enemy had entrenched themselves and, thanks to the able handling of the Battalion machine guns by Paterson, these were duly rounded up and brought in as prisoners, and a very fine body of men they were.

Though this was the only party of the enemy actually entrenched within the specified distance, it was quite evident that the Turks had made no general retreat, notwithstanding the very heavy losses they had sustained in the course of their attack. All the patrols along the front of the Brigade were met by heavy fire and, as my

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orders were specific, the patrols retired after fulfilling their mission.

About 7.30 a.m., and whilst the above-mentioned patrols were engaged, an order arrived (emanating from General d'Amade) for a general advance to be made all along the line, to commence at 6.30 a.m. The 87th Brigade was farther forward than the other parts of the line, and, not seeing any movement being made by the French on the right, I thought it better to wait and see. At about half-past eight it was apparent that our gallant allies were preparing to advance and shortly their attack developed.

This was met by a heavy fire from the Turks and checked for a time, but, after being rallied, the attack again pressed forward and had gained some ground when the Turks developed a strong counter-attack. A mass of about 2,000 of the enemy surged down the hill against the French; the latter, in about the same strength, dashed forward to meet this counter-stroke. Both masses gradually became wedge-shaped as the faster men on each side raced for the charge. It was a thrilling moment, but the climax never came. It appeared almost as if the points of the wedges met and that the leading men on either side actually crossed bayonets, but then, almost as if by word of command, the Turks swerved off to their left, the French to their left, and the Homeric contest was declined by both sides.

The Turks, however, by no means got away scatheless; as quick as lightning the French gunners opened with their seventy-fives and strewed the hill-slopes with enemy dead. That really was the end of any attempt to carry out an advance that day.

The enemy guns, following on our patrol actions on the left flank, got very busy and caused many casualties

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in the 87th Brigade; amongst others the gallant Jones, commanding the R.I.F., was killed. Almost at the same time Welch, commanding the K.O.S.B., who had come over from the extreme left to make a report to me, had an artery in his arm cut by shrapnel; luckily he was very close at the time and we were able to compress the artery until an improvised tourniquet could be applied.

The rest of that day, and the following day also, was devoted to burying the Turkish dead lying within 500 yards of our front line, whilst the Turkish Red Crescent parties were, by permission, carrying out the same task beyond that distance. What the total enemy casualties actually amounted to I did not know, but in killed alone it must have been over three thousand, and never again did the Turks attempt an attack on the Helles front, with the avowed object of driving us into the sea.

At Helles, on 3rd May, we received reinforcements in the shape of the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, under Major-General Herbert Cox, composed of one battalion of Gurkhas, one of Sikhs, and two of Punjabi Mahomedans. The two latter battalions, however, Cox was not prepared to ask to fight against their co-religionists and, after two days on the Peninsula, they were sent back to Egypt to be replaced by Gurkha battalions. I think they would have fought all right, and never have I seen troops more thoroughly fed up than were these two battalions when they got their orders to leave.

By this time all the artillery of the Division had been landed, and all the horses, so that the Turks had magnificent targets round "V" and "W" beaches for "Asiatic Annie" and her companions, which they were not slow to take advantage of. Again I think eventualities had been discounted; very few horses could actually be used in our restricted position, and hundreds

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fell victims to shell-fire from Asia and Achi Baba. A little later, when shell-fire on the beaches got very bad, I made an application for my own horses to be sent away, but was informed that this was impossible.

The 86th Brigade had sustained so many casualties that it was decided to amalgamate its battalions and attach these hybrids to the 87th and 88th Brigades; my share was known as the "Dubsters" (a combination of the Royal Dublin and Munster Fusiliers). I suppose the decision was inevitable, but I do not think it was a great success. Once you hit at regimental pride and traditions, you take away the main incentives to great deeds of derring do and self-sacrifice.

As we could not get forward from the restricted area we occupied, questions of sanitation became imperative. In passing, I may remark that this subject has been, in the past, a very neglected branch of a soldier's training, though undoubtedly it should form a most important part of the curriculum. In the United Kingdom a good deal of attention had been paid to sanitation by Regular troops previously to the Great War, especially during the annual manœuvres, but amongst Territorial units, and troops (both British and Indian) serving in India, very little had been done to emphasize the necessity for strict sanitary precautions in the field. So far as my own Brigade was concerned, with the energetic Petre as my emissary, it was fairly simple to have things in order, but inside the area occupied by the Brigade other troops were also in bivouac over whom we had no administrative control or authority. I therefore applied to the Division for the necessary authority; this was immediately granted, and elaborated by the creation of defined areas of sanitary control.

On the 5th May the Lancashire Fusilier Brigade of the

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GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON'S HEADQUARTERS.

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42nd Territorial Division was landed and one battalion brought up to the extreme left to take the place of the K.O.S.B., whilst the 87th Brigade took over more of the line on its right. When I was taking over this extra bit of line I noticed that there were two dead Turks lying some 80 yards behind it, so suggested to the officer commanding the battalion then in occupation that it might be a good thing to have them buried. He demurred to this suggestion by alleging that, as his battalion had not killed them, it was not part of their job to bury them—quite an extraordinary point of view for anyone to adopt.

In addition to the afore-mentioned reinforcements an Australian and a New Zealand brigade, as well as artillery from Anzac, were also brought to Helles on the 5th. The G.O.C.-in-C. had decided that every possible effort must be made to gain the Achi Baba position; this effort was to be made on the 7th and be supported, not only by naval guns, but by eighteen-pounders and howitzers of the Divisional Artillery as well as by the additional Anzac guns. It sounds all right, but—and it is a great BUT—modern war demands a vast expenditure of high-explosive ammunition to enable infantry to advance, except with appalling losses, and we had not got anything like the necessary amount.

Before 11 a.m. our artillery had completed registration of targets and at that hour the bombardment of the enemy positions opened from both sea and land. At 11.30 a.m. the bombardment ceased and the infantry started on their task. My Brigade and the 88th made some progress, but the Territorials on the extreme left were unable to make any advance against heavy machine-gun fire from well-concealed positions. Prendergast (Brigadier of the Lancashire Fusilier Brigade) showed me

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a message from his forward battalion commander (Lord Rochdale) asking for reinforcements and stating that he was unable to advance.

Knowing that the only possible remedy was fresh weight in the attack, I advised him to bring up another battalion with orders to push through and go forward at all costs. I then went off to the right of my own Brigade and was away for some time. On my return Prendergast informed me that no progress on the left could be made, though he now had three battalions up in line. I was horrified, as I knew the frontage was only about six hundred yards, so said that I thought he was making rather a Spion Kop of it and that the best thing he could do was to go over and see for himself what the actual situation was. On his return he gave me to understand that his battalions were somewhat demoralized and that the prospect of getting them to make further efforts was remote. I reported accordingly to General Hunter-Weston, and suggested the withdrawal of the Territorials and the reoccupation of that part of the line by a battalion of my own Brigade. This was done after darkness fell, and the Battalion gained some ground on the left that night and dug itself in.

On the 8th the attack was renewed ; the New Zealand Brigade came up into the fight, and I do not think I ever saw a more gallant attack delivered, but the gains were infinitesimal and the losses enormous. Again and again did the magnificent troops from New Zealand, and the undaunted remnants of my own Brigade, push forward, only to be decimated by the hail of fire (artillery, machine guns, and rifles) launched by the enemy. Sir Ian Hamilton, however, was not to be denied if by any possibility he could snatch a victory. At 5.30 p.m., after a short naval bombardment, the whole line, reinforced

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now by an Australian brigade, dashed forward with fixed bayonets in a fresh and desperate attack; this was received with an intense fire by the Turks and, in spite of the utmost heroism, the attack eventually collapsed, so at dusk we started to dig in on the limited, though hardly-won, ground gained.

Our G.O.C.-in-C. had been on shore all day and a close eye-witness of events; it must have been a bitter disappointment and a blow to all his plans, but he was the first to recognize, with his usual generosity, the devoted gallantry of his troops, and on the day following the above imperfectly described events he issued a special order praising their bravery and endurance.

However, as I have before stated, infantry attacks against entrenched positions held by a determined enemy can never hope for success unless the way thereto is paved for it by a dominating artillery, possessing unlimited H.E. shells.

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CHAPTER VI

GULLY RAVINE

A TERRITORIAL mountain battery (Ross and Argyll) was now attached to the 87th Brigade and, as their guns were old-fashioned and short-ranging, I posted them on the extreme left, close behind the infantry battalion of that flank. I mention the last point because of a somewhat ridiculous incident that happened shortly after the battery took up its position. About 11 o'clock one night, early in May, I got a telephone message from Wynter (commanding the artillery in my Brigade area) to say that he had received a report from the O.C. Mountain Battery that the infantry in front of him had retreated, so that he had hurriedly removed the breech-blocks of the guns and also retired with his personnel. I was puzzled for a time and then realized that the so-called retirement had merely been a party sent back to draw rations for the Battalion.

About the 12th we went back into reserve, our place on the left flank being taken over by Cox's Indian Brigade, the rest of the line being held by the 88th Brigade, the 42nd (Lancashire Territorial Division), and the Naval Division, joining up with the French on the right.

We were careful this time to keep our Headquarters from being a place of resort for all and sundry, so we remained unsuspected by the enemy and free from shells during the whole time we were there. The battalions of the Brigade were bivouacked on the sides of Gully Ravine, which they terraced for the purpose.

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General d'Amade returned to France, his place being taken by General Gouraud, and under the latter's command the French troops later took and finally retained the Turkish redoubt at the head of the Kereves Dere (aptly named " l'Haricot "). This redoubt had been the subject of much fighting, being constantly taken by the French and retaken by the Turks. General Gouraud's personality undoubtedly greatly enhanced the *moral* of the French corps and strengthened their will to victory.

Nothing much happened until on the 19th, when the Turks in overwhelming numbers endeavoured to drive the Australians and New Zealanders, at Anzac, into the sea. This attack was practically the enemy's last attempt at this game. He had found that attacks were too costly to be frequently embarked on, and that it paid better to let the British troops do the attacking in future.

Our aeroplane squadron had landed on the Peninsula but did not stay long, as, when discovered by the Turks, the planes at rest on the landing-ground became a splendid mark for the hostile artillery. Armoured cars of the Naval Division had also been landed and dug in for protection.

Two of my chargers having already been killed on the beaches, I thought it safer to bring the remaining one farther forward, trusting to a certain amount of cover from view, afforded by trees, and the fact that the enemy was not likely to waste shells on a solitary horse. Unfortunately a brigade of the Naval Division, moving across to the right of the Peninsula, passed close by and drew enemy fire to which my poor horse fell a victim.

One day I was down talking to General Breeks (C.R.A. 29th Division) at his observation post, when a discussion arose as to the best means of distinguishing the trenches occupied by our men, when we had made an advance and

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taken trenches from the enemy. The system of the infantry carrying forward screens, khaki on the side towards the enemy and red on the side towards our own guns, had been a failure, because in many cases the Turks had recaptured trenches by counter-attack; the men in charge of the screens had been killed and the screens left in position or otherwise utilized by the enemy.

Looking from Breek's observation post our trenches were well defined by a line of shimmering empty ration tins at the back of them. I therefore suggested that, instead of screens or flags, each man should carry a piece of tin in his haversack, and these tin discs could be flashed from newly captured trenches.

The idea was taken up and improved on. In future each man in the attacking line carried a triangular piece of tin on his back. This method proved of immense value to our gunners during all our further attacks; the flashing line of tin being perfectly visible at ranges where the men themselves were indistinguishable.

The submarine menace had now arrived. It heralded its presence by sinking two of our battleships (*Majestic* and *Triumph*), and put the fear of the Lord into the shipping clustered round the end of the Peninsula. It was quite a sight, though a somewhat depressing one, to see the whole flotilla speeding away for Imbros like a line of driven grouse. I was at Divisional Headquarters shortly after the advent of the submarines, and hearing heavy firing going on ran to the cliffs. From this point we saw some half a dozen destroyers and a cruiser circling at full speed and firing at some object which we could not distinguish, but which of course we guessed must be a submarine. Presently the firing stopped and a halt was called; no result was reported, but we heard afterwards that all the commotion had been caused by the

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carcase of a dead horse, one of whose legs, sticking stiffly out of the water, had been mistaken for the periscope of a submarine.

With the arrival of new formations it was necessary to have a Corps Commander to exercise control over all the British formations now at Helles, and Hunter-Weston was promoted to command this new Corps (8th) with the rank of Lieutenant-General. He still, however, continued, pending the appointment of a successor, to exercise command of the 29th Division.

On the 24th General Hunter-Weston sent for me and ordered me to undertake what I thought at the time a most unpleasant duty. He said that the Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division was commanded by a Territorial officer, with very little experience in such a command; that he wished me to go and live with this Brigade and instruct its commander in his duties; that in addition I was to take Lucas with me to do the same for the Brigade Major.

In vain I protested that I did not know enough myself and certainly could not instruct anyone else; that surely the 42nd Division could detail a senior staff officer for the purpose. My protests were entirely unheeded and I received a definite order to carry out my instructions, and to join General Noel Lee (the Brigadier in question) the following day.

Having handed over command of the Brigade to Casson, with Petre to act as Brigade Major, I set off with Lucas for Lee's Headquarters. That day, however, happened to coincide with a remarkable cloud-burst which broke over Achi Baba; I do not think it lasted for more than half an hour, and we got practically no rain at all, but every watercourse and dry nullah became a torrent, many of our trenches were flooded, and the East

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Krithia Nullah, on the farther side of which Lee's headquarters were, was a roaring flood which it was impossible to cross.

Lucas and I waited for some time watching this torrent carrying down to the sea masses of Turkish corpses washed out from their temporary graves, and then decided that it would be best to return for the night to our own Brigade bivouac. By next morning things were normal again and we reached Lee's bivouac without any difficulty. I felt in a very awkward position, but Lee was such a good fellow that my task was made easy. We had a conference with his commanding officers, and I went round the trenches occupied by the Brigade in company with Lee. Though unable to say that everything was in apple-pie order, I was at the same time impressed by what I saw; especially was I much taken by the appearance and general efficiency of two battalions of this Brigade (5th and 6th Manchester Battalions). The former was composed of Wigan miners commanded and officered by mine owners, managers, and mining engineers. The men were physically a fine, hard-bitten looking lot, who, quite evidently, readily obeyed and looked up to their officers; in fact discipline was, so to speak, ready-made. The latter was what used to be termed a "class" battalion, composed of clerks and others in big business houses in Manchester, officered by prominent business men; this had been Noel Lee's own battalion and was thoroughly efficient in every way.

Having spent twenty-four hours with Lee I realized that he was a really good Brigadier and very much liked and trusted by his officers and men. Possibly in matters of minor administrative detail he was not all he should be, and he had a bad habit of going off by himself to the trenches without letting his Brigade Major know where

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he had gone to, but I could find no other cause for complaint. I therefore went to Divisional Headquarters and reported accordingly to Hunter-Weston, but was only told to go back and remain with Lee until further orders.

A new attack on the Turkish positions was to take place on 4th June, and our artillery had been saving every round of ammunition to try to make this a definite success.

The attack was to be made by Cox's Indian Brigade (reinforced by a Lancashire Fusilier Battalion) on the left, by the 88th Brigade on the right of Gully Ravine, then, in order from the left, the Manchester Brigade, Naval Division, and the French. A night advance was to be made on the night of 2nd June and all the troops destined to carry out the attack were to dig themselves in within two hundred yards of the enemy trenches.

In front of the Manchester Brigade the line of enemy trenches formed a re-entrant, and, with an almost full moon, I would have preferred not to advance into this re-entrant, so I ventured to point out that the resulting casualties might be very heavy. However, the orders were explicit and had to be carried out. The result was that the Brigade made the advance successfully, and dug itself in all along the line within the stipulated two hundred yards. Luckily the enemy fired high and the resulting casualties only amounted to fifty or sixty, nearly all being wounded cases.

Hunter-Weston came down on the 3rd personally to congratulate Lee's Brigade on their successful effort; to me he said: "There you are! You see the thing has been done with no casualties." I gently murmured "Fifty," to which he retorted: "Well! that's nothing, it would have been worth doing if you had had five hundred."

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On that day Lucas and I were allowed to rejoin our own Brigade and I never saw that very gallant gentleman, Noel Lee, again. He was wounded in the attack which took place on the following day and, I heard afterwards, died in hospital at Malta from hæmorrhage due to the reopening of his wound.

Brigadier-General W. Doran, who had succeeded to command of the 88th Brigade (vice Williams wounded), represented that his Brigade was very weak and that unless another battalion was sent to him he would have to attack without any Brigade Reserve. I received orders to send him my strongest battalion. This happened to be the K.O.S.B., which had lately received drafts and officers and was now in the proud and exceptional position of possessing a strength of 21 officers and 750 men.

I will try to describe the fight of 4th June, and, to do so coherently, will begin with the Indian Brigade on the extreme left and state what came under my personal observation only.

Zero time was arranged for 12 noon, but before that hour the enemy were treated to the most adequate bombardment our gunners had yet been in a position to deliver. After a quarter of an hour the guns ceased firing whilst the infantry showed a line of fixed bayonets above the parapet to induce the Turks to re-man their trenches. Then down crashed the bombardment once more and continued for half an hour; at 12 noon the British guns finally ceased and the infantry started for the attack.

On the extreme left the 6th Gurkhas moved forward under cover of the cliffs and reached the end of the first enemy trench almost unobserved. The attached Lancashire Fusilier Battalion attacking the centre were mown

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down almost to a man before they had got many yards from their own parapet. The 14th Sikhs, on the right of the Brigade, started with the advantage of some dead ground, and made some progress, but when they emerged into view they were practically annihilated, and though some of the survivors got as far as the Turkish wire, they were there killed. The 14th Sikhs, as a fighting unit, had ceased to exist. The 6th Gurkhas were therefore left in the air and, most of their British officers having been shot, they retired, losing heavily in doing so.

On the right of Gully Ravine the 88th Brigade made considerable progress. The K.O.S.B., instead of being kept in reserve, were, to my indignation, sent against the strongest portion of the Turkish defences and put up a brilliant show. They took first a strong redoubt, then captured three more lines of enemy trenches and eventually reached the final line of Turkish defence, known as H.14. Alas! they were not supported. After holding on in H.14 for six hours, and being almost surrounded, they retired to the next line, which they tenaciously held against counter-attacks until midday on the 5th. Being still unsupported on either flank, they eventually fell back on the main body of the Brigade. This Battalion had lost 20 officers and 430 men in the twenty-four hours, yet they were still a fighting unit and remained on duty in the new line held by the 88th Brigade. That Brigade had advanced its front by about five hundred yards, and a number of Turks as well as a few Germans had been captured.

The Manchester Brigade also made a brilliant advance, broke right through the Turkish defences, capturing a number of prisoners; in fact, had they been supported on their right flank, the road to the coveted position of Achi Baba lay open.

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The Royal Naval Division also gained considerable ground, capturing a strong redoubt and two lines of enemy trenches, but the French on their right were driven back by a heavy counter-attack, so the flank of the R.N.D. became exposed and they also had to retire.

The ground gained by the Manchester Brigade was not of the same tactical importance as that captured by the 88th Brigade, and the failure of the French and Naval Divisions precluded a push forward in that area; but the Manchesters could have formed to their right flank and protected a forward movement on the 88th Brigade front.

I have never been able to fathom the reason for non-exploitation of success on 4th June, but I presume that our G.O.C.-in-C., who was not the man to miss chances, and had been a close eye-witness of events on the day in question, had some very good reason for the inaction.

General de Lisle arrived during the progress of the fight to assume command of the 29th Division, and on the 5th asked me to take him round the various Brigade Headquarters belonging to or attached to the 29th Division.

First we visited Herbert Cox's Indian Brigade and found all, from the Commander downwards, rather under the weather. Cox pointed out the various Turkish trenches in his immediate front and gave a description of the fight on the previous day. Before leaving, de Lisle said: "We must take those trenches soon," but Cox replied: "You will never take those trenches by direct assault. The only way would be to mine them." When we left I said: "I am sure they can be taken; give my Brigade a chance and we will do it," to which he answered: "All right, you shall, but we will mine them first." I could not see how it was possible to mine such a distance, but

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de Lisle assured me that it was nothing to what had been done in France.

We next made for Doran's Headquarters and I, thinking that these must have been moved farther forward when the 88th Brigade attack had advanced, led him more to the front than I ought to have done. Both officers and men of Doran's Brigade seemed to be ignorant of his whereabouts, so by dint of wrong directions we eventually found ourselves in their front-line trenches, where I am bound to say confusion reigned supreme. Eventually I said that evidently Doran's Headquarters had not moved and, as I knew where they had been the previous day, we had better go there, and there eventually we found him and his staff.

I could see that de Lisle was far from satisfied with what he had observed in the forward area, so I was not altogether surprised when, shortly after, a change was made in the Brigade command. The 86th Brigade was again brought into being and Wolley-Dod placed in command, whilst Cayley relieved Doran in the 88th Brigade. The 87th took over the trenches captured by the 88th Brigade, and we had our work cut out to bury all the dead Turks, straighten out the seemingly confused network of trenches, and make them into a defensive line suitable from our point of view.

The Turks were the most industrious diggers possible, and it always seemed to me that, wherever they found a vacant piece of ground, they were not happy until they had converted it into a network of trenches. This theory was the only one I could find to account for the jumble of trenches which we now had to bring into defensive shape. Luckily many useless trenches formed suitable graves for their dead and thereby certainly saved us considerable time and labour.

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I brought back my shattered K.O.S.B. into reserve; there were only two officers left, viz. the Commanding Officer (Stoney) and the Quartermaster (Simpson), and these two carried out an heroic task in the reorganization of the Battalion. By de Lisle's orders I had to send one battalion to assist Cox in holding his line, as well as supply him with skilled miners for the, in my opinion, somewhat doubtful scheme of driving tunnels to the Turkish trenches, nearly three hundred yards away. Needless to say, the tunnelling scheme fell through, because, after completing some twenty yards, the workers struck solid rock.

Brigade Headquarters moved into Gully Ravine and Wolley-Dod took over our late abode. Evidently he had not used the same precautions for concealment as we had, because in a few days the Turks shelled the place so badly that the 86th had to seek a more salubrious spot for their Headquarters.

After the effort of the 4th June our C.R.A. (Simpson-Baikie, who had taken the place of Breeks, invalided) had to husband his shells to such an extent that the artillery was on an allowance of one round per gun per diem and no H.E. was allowed to be fired at all.

As a fact the shortage of shells, especially H.E., was almost entirely the cause of the failure of the Gallipoli expedition; the most heroic infantry in the world cannot go on attacking an unbroken enemy time after time; the losses in man-power, let alone *moral*, forbid this. It is perhaps presumptuous to say so, but I cannot help feeling that, had I been in Sir Ian Hamilton's place, I should have issued an ultimatum to the Secretary of State for War and said: "Unless you can send me such-and-such guns, and such-and-such an amount of H.E. and shrapnel, I see no hope of a successful issue to the present stalemate in the Gallipoli Peninsula; as I cannot ask my

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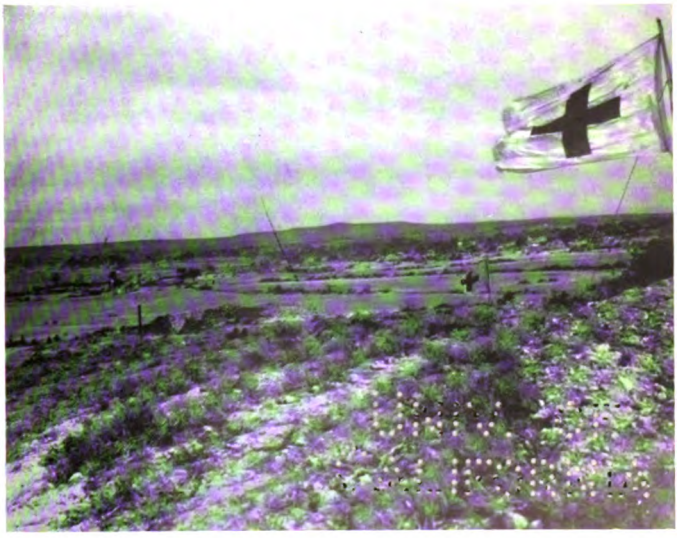
GULLY BEACH: GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.



DISTANT VIEW OF ACHI BABA.

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infantry to attack again unless that attack can be adequately prepared for, and supported by a preponderating artillery fire."

I asked General Hunter-Weston one day, about this time, what his candid opinion about the Gallipoli situation was. His reply: "If you ask me as a soldier I think it is rotten, but if as a man I think it is splendid," emboldened me to suggest that, as neither the number of guns, nor their supply of ammunition, was sufficient to prepare the whole front for attack, it might be better to select certain tactical points in the Turkish line of defence and take them seriatim. In fact I urged that we should ape the tactics employed by the Japanese during their attack on Port Arthur. My suggestion was not, however, favourably received; indeed at this time among our leaders in France, and elsewhere, the theory of the "break through" was the predominating one. No one seemed to have considered that, with the enemy reserves unbroken, and the impossibility of getting our guns forward in time to support them, the troops who had broken through must be overwhelmed.

Whilst the two battalions on the right of Gully Ravine were reorganizing the captured Turkish trenches, they had had to barricade an old Turkish communication trench and establish a bombing station there; whilst to straighten out our defensive line a new trench was started, which ran from near this bombing post. One night's work had only partially completed this new trench, and the following night it was only held by a few small posts for the protection of the working parties, timed to start work at 10 p.m.

Before that hour some five hundred of the enemy, having evidently assembled in the neighbourhood of a redoubt known as "The Boomerang," crept up through

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the scrub and, with a hail of bombs, killed or wounded the small parties occupying the bombing post and the partially finished trench. They pressed on with a rush and for a few minutes established a footing in part of our main trench, at the junction between the S.W.B. and the R.I.F. O'Sullivan of the R.I.F. and Johnson of the S.W.B., however, quickly rallied their men and drove out the attackers, killing many of them in doing so. Casson, who was in command of that particular section of trenches, endeavoured then to recapture the incomplete trench and bombing station, but his efforts were unsuccessful and costly.

On learning the situation I ordered that no more direct action should be taken that night, but that all available machine guns should be mounted at certain points an hour before daybreak in readiness to open a cross fire on the new trench. Bombs and rifle grenades were to be collected, and bombing parties to assemble in readiness at the same hour, at the point where the old Turkish communication trench joined our main line. I personally joined the Battalion on the left of Gully Ravine and arranged for co-operation by the machine guns of that Battalion and some others belonging to the Royal Naval Division (attached temporarily to my Brigade).

At 5 a.m. the machine guns on the right of the Ravine opened and the bombing parties started down the communication trench. Many Turks were killed by the bombs and grenades; those who jumped out of the trench were accounted for by the machine guns from the left; the remnant, some two hundred, took refuge in the Boomerang redoubt.

The redoubt could not be assaulted without incurring heavy casualties, through fire from the main enemy

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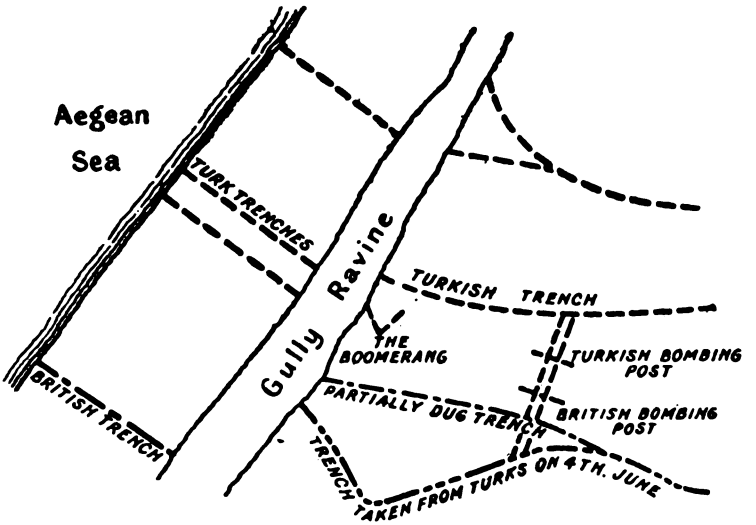

BOMBING AFFAIR, 16TH JUNE

trenches on the left of the Ravine, so I telephoned to the Division to ask for half a dozen H.E. to be put into the Boomerang.

The Division put me on to Simpson-Baikie and the following conversation took place:

HE: "I hear you want some H.E. fired on the Boomerang."

I (*in a pleased voice*): "Yes, please."

HE: "Well, I am very sorry, but I can't do it."

I (*not so pleased*): "But the place is so stiff with Turks that they cannot move and a few shells would either kill or bolt the lot."

HE: "Well, I am sorry."

I (*sotto voce*): "Oh, d—— your sorrow."

HE: "I don't want this known or to go any

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farther, but we haven't a single round of H.E. on the Peninsula."

There was nothing more to be done or said, and the mass of Turks escaped from their crowded prison after dusk that evening.

I went round to the right again and found the old communication trench full to the brim with dead Turks. The new trench was again lightly held by the S.W.B. and, on going round it, I found two men at one post eating their breakfast of biscuit and jam and each using a dead Turk as a cushion to sit on.

A great deal of gallantry had been shown in this little affair; O'Sullivan was recommended for the V.C.; Johnson received the D.S.O., and other immediate rewards were given. I should add that our bombs on this occasion were of the home-made or jam-pot variety. We buried all the Turks (about 100) we could get at, with a good deal of labour, but the weather was now so hot, and the smell and flies became so bad, that I determined to burn all the bodies that could not be got at without risk in the daytime.

On the far side of our bombing station and about thirty yards farther down the communication trench the enemy also had a bombing station. Between the two stations the trench was filled with dead and the smell perfectly horrible and nauseating, more than human nature could stand. The following day I managed to get a dozen tins of petrol from Howell-Jones (The D.A.D.O.S. of the Division) and that night men crawled out and poured this over the heaped-up dead. The resulting fire was thoroughly satisfactory; not only was the smell abated and the flies diminished, but the wind, setting towards the Turks' bombing station, the fire effectively destroyed that.

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I heard that the G.O.C.-in-C. was at first rather perturbed about this burning, but luckily an order was found on the person of a dead Turkish officer, directing that the bodies of the infidels were to be burnt whilst those of the faithful were to be collected and reverently buried, so what was sauce for the goose was also sauce for the gander. In future we adopted the same expedient, for mitigating, as far as possible, the appalling stenches arising from the presence of so many unburied corpses.

On the 18th of June the enemy put down a somewhat heavy bombardment to which I need hardly say our guns were unable to reply. I knew the reason of course, on account of my telephonic interview with Simpson-Baikie, but naturally the regimental officers and men could not understand the situation. The bombardment was followed by a somewhat half-hearted attack, which was easily beaten off with heavy losses on the side of the enemy.

The French assisted by the Royal Naval Division made a splendid attack on the left flank of the Turkish positions on the 21st. It was a great sight to watch the wonderful creeping barrage put down by the seventy-fives and see the infantry advancing behind a wall of bursting shells. This time the contentious "Haricot" was taken for the *n*th time, but on this occasion it was "for keeps." Both Divisions of the French Corps participated in this attack. The 1st Division was driven back by a heavy counter-attack, but, after a further artillery preparation, went in again and regained what they had first won. The losses on both sides, the French and the Naval Division as well as the Turks, had been heavy, but it had been a splendid fight and General Gouraud had infused his own magnificent courage into his troops. The total gains were not great (some 400

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yards), but the moral effect of this gallant attack by our allies was inspiring and the way in which they hung on to their gains in face of heavy counter-attacks still more so.

Preparations were now afoot for an attack against the enemy right flank and, according to his promise, General de Lisle selected my Brigade to carry out the attack on our extreme left against the trenches which had created the impression of impregnability on the 4th June. Although the Brigadiers concerned were given intimation of the projected assault, we were all sworn to the utmost secrecy; nevertheless it soon became generally known that a big push was to take place on the 28th June, and I rather think the Brigadiers, or Staff, who were in the know, were blamed for letting slip the information.

The real discloser of the secret was G.H.Q., who had instructed Egypt to prepare for many wounded after 28th June. Harrison of the Borders, who was in Egypt convalescing from his second wound, heard this, and getting the next ship for the Peninsula, arrived on the 27th in time to get severely wounded and put on board ship again on the 28th. I think his career on Gallipoli must have been a record; he was actually on the Peninsula for three days, was in three fights, and was wounded three times.

Owing to the casualties in officers I had had to send Edden back to his Battalion, so I was for the time being without a Brigade Machine Gun Officer. However, during one of my excursions to " W " beach, I discovered Reggie Hart, of my own Regiment (who had come as a volunteer from the Egyptian Army), masquerading as an assistant beach-master and was lucky enough to get him to fill the appointment.

On the 26th I represented to de Lisle that, as the

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Brigade had to take over from Cox's Indian Brigade on the evening of the 27th, I really must be allowed to take my battalion commanders round and explain what each had to do; rather grudgingly he gave his consent to this. The Divisional orders for the attack reached me on the 26th and, curiously enough, omitted all mention of the Boomerang redoubt which would enfilade our projected attack at close range. I represented this, but was told that, if my Brigade were successful in taking the trenches, the Boomerang would *ipso facto* fall; to this I replied, that that would no doubt be the case but that a great many of my own men would also fall.

Eventually it was arranged that we should take the Boomerang five minutes before zero hour. A trench mortar (nicknamed La Demoiselle) was lent to us by General Gouraud and this, under charge of a French sous-officier, duly arrived and was dug in in such a position that it could plump its death-dealing bombs (100 lb. melinite) bang into the dangerous Boomerang redoubt. The sous-officier was most particular about the emplacement for La Demoiselle, and about arrangements for his own protection; as he very wisely said: "Elle est bonne, mais très, très dangereuse."

I had better mention that about the middle of June I had to my surprise, certainly to my consternation, been promoted to the rank of Major-General. I presume that promotion is always supposed to be pleasant to the recipient, but I fear that to me it did not give the satisfaction it ought to have done. I knew that eventually it would mean leaving the 87th Brigade, of which I was intensely proud and devoted to; besides which, I was fully aware of my own limitations and considered that command of the finest Brigade in the British Army was good enough for me.

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In saying this I have no wish to seem wanting in gratitude to General Hunter-Weston or to Sir Ian Hamilton, who had been good enough to appreciate my work so highly; it was simply that I had really no military ambition. During the South African War I had risen from command of a company of Mounted Infantry to the command of an independent column, and had achieved the rare distinction of being awarded a double brevet, and at that time I was ambitious. But when that war was over I had gone back to the command of a company and, except for a short break, continued in that position for ten years. I hope I always did my duty to the best of my ability, but it killed such military ambition as I possessed.

The above is a digression from the story of Gallipoli for which I apologize, but for the life of me I cannot see why, if an officer is promoted by His Majesty to be a Lieutenant-Colonel or Colonel, for services in the field, he should not be employed in a capacity suitable to the rank he has attained or rather been granted.

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CHAPTER VII

TRENCH FIGHTING AT HELLES

ON the 27th I took over the trenches on the left from Cox and it was arranged that next day, five minutes before the end of the artillery preparation, two companies of the Borders should rush the Boomerang.

At zero hour the S.W.B. and the K.O.S.B., forming the first wave, should capture the first two lines of Turkish trenches, really a double trench line. Directly they had reached their objective, the second wave, consisting of the remaining two companies of the Borders and the R.I.F., should pass through the first wave and push on for the capture of the third line.

There was some slight difference of opinion as to the above allotment of objectives. General de Lisle maintained that the first wave should be given the enemy third line as its goal, but I was, and am, convinced that simplicity in orders is the foundation of success in an attack; besides there was always the chance that the first wave might fail, unless its objective was strictly limited. In the end he very kindly waived his objection and allowed my arrangement to stand.

On the right of Gully Ravine the 156th Brigade of the newly arrived Lowland Division was to attack the enemy trenches on the ridge and push forward in line with our advance on the left.

When the 87th Brigade had secured its objective, as above set forth, two battalions of the 86th were to follow,

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as a third wave, and capture the fourth and fifth lines of Turkish trenches on the left, assisted by a battalion of Cox's Gurkha Brigade advancing along the broken ground under the edge of the cliffs.

On the morning of the 28th and long before the artillery preparation began, La Demoiselle proceeded to hurl her huge hundred-pound H.E. bombs into the Boomerang Redoubt, causing enormous explosions, but the Turks did not, as I had anticipated, bolt out of it.

Simpson-Baikie's available gun-power was, on this day, greatly augmented by the admirable French batteries which General Gouraud had generously placed at his disposal, and so far as the front over which the 87th Brigade had to attack was concerned I was very appreciative of the preparation. Not only had the enemy trenches been systematically searched by H.E., but, in addition, the eighteen-pounder shrapnel had thoroughly demolished the enemy wire.

Zero hour had been fixed for 11 a.m., and at 10.55 a.m. the Borders rushed from their trenches and captured the Boomerang, like, as Sir Ian Hamilton so aptly described it in his dispatch, " a pack of hounds pouring out of covert." Notwithstanding the severe bombardment this redoubt had sustained, both from La Demoiselle and a 4·5 howitzer battery, the survivors of the gallant Turkish garrison put up a determined fight. One Turk in particular continued to fire until he was bayoneted through the shoulder and made a prisoner. I remember afterwards seeing this same Turk being tenderly assisted down to the dressing-station by one of the Borders, so his courage had evidently been appreciated by our own brave men. The total garrison had consisted of about 120 Turks, who were all either killed or captured, so it was just as well that we had been allowed to take this

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post, which enfiladed our line of advance, before the main attack started.

At 11 a.m. the K.O.S.B. on the right, and the S.W.B. on the left, went over the top and dashed for their objectives. The former found part of the trench line roofed over, which caused some slight delay in getting in and led to a few casualties, but fortunately not many, and the trenches were soon in our possession. It was hardly three minutes after zero time when the Borders on the right, and the R.I.F. on the left, poured over for the capture of the Third Turkish Line and in a very short time it was in our hands.

The guns meanwhile had lifted their fire and were pounding the fourth and fifth lines. Wolley-Dod brought up the 86th and, with the Royal Fusiliers leading, supported the Lancashire Fusiliers, a magnificent advance resulted in the capture of these two further trenches. Altogether we had made an advance, on the left, of over 1,000 yards, and this against trenches which had been said to be impregnable. But (unfortunately, there nearly always seems to be a " but ")—things on the right of the Ravine had not gone so smoothly. There the artillery preparation had not been so deadly, and although part of the gallant 156th Brigade secured their first objective on their left, the remainder failed to do so, and their casualties were very heavy, especially in officers. This failure affected the rôle of the remaining two battalions of the 86th, Royal Dublin and Munster Fusiliers, who had to advance up the Gully Ravine and link up with their own Brigade on the left and 156th on the right. They did advance, but got caught by enfilade fire from their right and lost heavily.

It was arranged that a further attempt should be made to capture the objectives on the right and that, after

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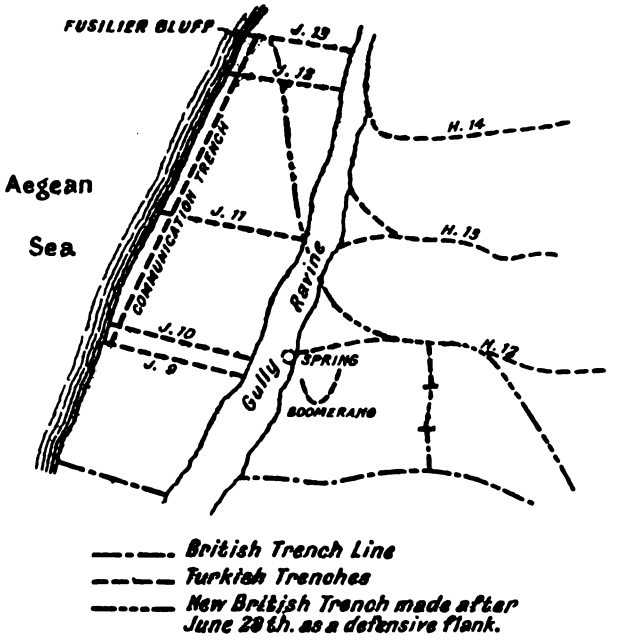

SKETCH TO SHOW TRENCHES TAKEN ON 28TH JUNE

another artillery preparation, the 156th supported by the 88th should again assault. By some misunderstanding, however, the infantry attacked again at the hour timed for the artillery preparation to begin, so that the guns did not open fire; the results were heavy casualties and complete failure. The failure on the right somewhat nullified the effect of the success on the left, and we now had to make a new front facing the right flank.

The 86th Brigade was withdrawn and the Gurkhas took over the trenches captured by the Royal Fusiliers, as well as the bluff running down to the sea, afterwards known as Fusilier Bluff. The R.I.F. came next to them, then the Borders and the S.W.B. The K.O.S.B., still a very weak battalion, had to be withdrawn to clear up the mass of Turkish material and bury the numerous

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enemy dead. I attach a rough sketch of the enemy trenches to show more plainly the results of the fight.

That night the enemy counter-attacked with some vigour but was repulsed, and next morning showed us still in possession of our gains. A number of the enemy had got in between the captured trenches and failed to get away before daylight, so in the morning one saw small parties of our men flushing Turks in the scrub and shooting them as they fled. I should premise that up to this time the Turks had acted on the principle of no quarter and had shot any of our men who had fallen into their hands; at the same time they themselves neither asked for nor expected quarter.

Before the fight narrated above, I had, in view of the catastrophe to the K.O.S.B. on the 4th, suggested to de Lisle that a portion of officers, out of each battalion, should be kept in reserve, but he would not hear of it. Nevertheless I did keep some out of the fight, much to their indignation. Under the circumstances it could not be done openly, but I gave orders for each battalion to send a captain and a subaltern for duty with Brigade Headquarters; these officers were kept behind until the assault had proved a success, after which they were sent to rejoin their battalions. It is a curious thing that the principle of keeping in hand officers and N.C. officers, for the purpose of reorganizing shattered units, was so long delayed during the war. Afterwards in Mesopotamia, when in command of a Corps, I always did this and found it most useful on several occasions, though General Maude never liked the idea.

The day of the 29th was occupied in consolidating our position and making new trenches to face our right, as well as in cleaning up the Turkish debris, consisting of machine guns, rifles, ammunition, bombs, equipment,

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great-coats, and rubbish of every description. Amongst other gains on the day we had secured a very excellent spring of water in the Ravine, just under the Boomerang, which was probably the reason why the enemy had always held this seemingly insignificant redoubt so strongly; anyhow, the good water-supply was a great asset to us. The 87th Brigade Headquarters now moved farther up the Ravine to be nearer to the new scene of action.

The enemy again attacked that night, principally against the portion held by the Gurkhas, but they were beaten off, largely by the assistance of two of our destroyers, Adrian Keyes being, as usual, very much on the spot with H.M.S. *Wolverine*.

On the 30th de Lisle sent Perceval, now G.S.O.(1) 29th Division, to tell me that he had been round the captured trenches and was not at all satisfied with the work that had been done. This, however, was only the result of a misconception. The next day, when I was able to take the G.O.C. Division round the position, he agreed that everything possible had been done, so all was well.

A splendid attack by the French on the 30th succeeded in capturing a redoubt, named "The Quadrilateral," as well as in killing large numbers of Turks.

We were now on the rising tide, but the old, old stumbling-block was, as always, there—namely, lack of shells to push our advantage. On the night of the 1st July a Turkish bombing attack ejected the Gurkhas from a trench, but Edden's company of the R.I.F. went in and recaptured it within half an hour. O'Sullivan and Corporal Somers advancing in the open, one on either side of the trench, thoroughly bombed the Turks, whilst a bayonet party came along, in the trench, to mop up the

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remains. O'Sullivan (for the second time) and Corporal Somers were both recommended for, and awarded, the V.C. Alas! in O'Sullivan's case it was a posthumous award; he was killed, in a manner such a gallant officer would wish to die, at Suvla on 21st August.

On the 1st came the very bad news that General Gouraud had been blown up by one of those confounded big shells from Asia. He was very badly injured, arm shattered, leg broken, and other injuries. Since his arrival at Helles, Gouraud had infused his own indomitable spirit into his whole Corps and he was a real loss to the fighting spirit in Gallipoli.

The Turks did not seem to be at all pleased or satisfied about having lost a few trenches on the 28th and the subsequent failure of their counter-attacks. During the night of the 5th they opened a heavy rifle- and machine-gun fire and then, in the dim dawn, they gave us the heaviest shelling we had yet received, whilst our guns, from lack of H.E., were silent. All this noise was the prelude to an infantry attack in force.

In so far as the left was concerned the attack was stopped dead by shrapnel, machine guns, and rifles, and, particularly in front of Fusilier Bluff, the corpses lay in heaps. De Lisle told me later that the Turks had asked for an armistice to bury their dead, but I said that I hoped this would not be granted because the salient was a weak spot in the defensive line and I thought the enemy would think twice about making another big attack there, if, to do so, they had to advance over the lines of their own dead. General de Lisle approved and so did Sir Ian Hamilton, so the bodies remained there as a salutary but insanitary warning to others.

The action of 28th June was the last time I had the honour to command my splendid Brigade in a general

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action, and I think for this reason I have entered into more than usual detail.

The weather was now very hot and the thoroughly insanitary condition of the confined space we occupied bred flies in myriads; it was almost impossible to eat anything on account of these pests and nearly everyone was suffering from colitis and mild or severe forms of dysentery. The ground lately acquired from the enemy was largely responsible for this plague of flies and disease, but the hundreds of rotting corpses, lying about unburied beyond this terrain, were prolific breeding-grounds. We buried such bodies as we could get at and destroyed many others by the aid of petrol during the hours of darkness. Still the stench of corruption remained in the air to an almost nauseating extent, and this, and the fact that the corpse-bred flies clustered on every particle of food, was perhaps the most trying part of the Gallipoli campaign.

The 87th Brigade, nevertheless, never lost its reputation of being the most cheerful unit in the force, and as, owing to lack of shells, there could be no further attack, we arranged leg-pulls for the Turks. Pretended attacks, organized in different ways, never failed to draw heavy and innocuous fire from the evidently somewhat demoralized enemy; a few small night raids were undertaken and the "Inspecting General" was for a time a "*succès fou.*" The latter, which consisted of a dummy head, adorned with a large grey moustache, set on the end of a pole and surmounted by an old staff cap, used daily to make a round of the trenches and take numerous peeps over the parapet. The "General" was always followed during his "Inspection" by a fusillade from the Turks and eventually got into such a state of disrepair that he had to be knocked off duty.

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Ormonde Winter, commanding 10th Battery R.F.A., managed to get hold of a naval 12-pounder, afterwards known as "Rambling Kate," for which there really *was* ammunition available. "Kate," on runners, used to be taken during the night to some tactical point whence an enemy trench could be enfiladed at short range and at daybreak in the morning would proceed to deroof the said trench, causing much consternation to the Turkish occupants, who loudly called on Allah for help.

Another source of amusement was to send an emissary to the beach to collect the latest news. It was a well-known saying in Gallipoli that there were liars of three degrees: Positive, "Da . . . d liars"; Comparative, "Beach liars"; Superlative, "Aviators." The news obtained was generally something startling and reflected credit on the vivid imaginations of the beach personnel.

On the 12th July another attack was made by the 52nd Lowland Division and the French Corps, under cover of the French artillery preparation, but we were not called upon to do more than demonstrate in order to pin the enemy in front of us to his ground. I never saw the orders for this attack, but rather gathered that the objectives could not have been limited ones. At the beginning the 52nd Division broke right through the enemy defences in certain places, but those who broke through never came back. The gain at the conclusion of the severe fighting was very small and the losses quite out of proportion to the results.

Meanwhile large reinforcements had arrived at Mudros Harbour, including the 10th, 11th, and 13th Divisions, whilst other units were on their way out, amongst these being the 53rd (Welch) and 54th (East Anglian) Divisions, both Territorial units. Partly to rest the 29th Division, and partly to get the reinforcing

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divisions acclimatized and shot over, the three infantry brigades of the 29th were sent to rest in the neighbourhood of Mudros. After arranging for the transport of the battalions of the 87th Brigade, we, the Headquarters, crossed to Mudros in the regular ferryboat and on arrival reported to Headquarters L. of C., which had its habitat on the s.s. *Aragon*. This ship was popularly reported amongst the troops to be aground on a bed of empty bottles, but I fancy this must have been a gross libel, certainly a less cheerful crowd than the L. of C. staff I have seldom encountered and was not surprised on seeing the conditions under which they were working.

Absolutely no arrangements had been made for the reception of the brigades of the 29th Division, but eventually a dusty, traffic-surrounded spot, near the enteric hospital, was pointed out to us as a suitable place in which to bivouac. We decided then that, having had a benefit of dust and flies for so long, we would make our own arrangements. A cleaner, greener site was selected and there we arranged our bivouac which we *were* to occupy for ten days and actually *did* for a week. By one of those frequent mistakes which occur under the dual control of sea and land two of our battalions had been taken to Imbros, and did not reach us until the following day.

On seeing the different methods employed at Mudros by the French L. of C., and our own, one could not but award the palm to the French as being the more efficient of the two. Their hospitals were occupying charming sites and their reserve camps also, so that there was no crowding or dust; their ordnance stores were in sheds on shore and could easily be got at; their L. of C. staff were also properly housed ashore. In our case, on the contrary, hospitals, reserve camps, and so on,

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were massed on the edge of the harbour; our ordnance stores, on board s.s. *Minnetonka*, were difficult to get at and when got almost more difficult to transport ashore; our L. of C. staff had to work, live, and have their being on the s.s. *Aragon*, working under the most cramped and unfavourable conditions and getting little or no healthy exercise. There was no wonder that they looked depressed.

On the second day after our arrival Colonel Agnew and two other senior officers came to my bivouac and announced that they had been sent by General Wallace, G.O.C. the L. of C., to take over command respectively of the K.O.S.B., S.W.B., and the Borders. I was somewhat taken aback and could only say that there must have been some grave mistake, as I was perfectly satisfied with the officers now in command of those battalions and had no wish to replace them. They then asked me if I would go with them and see General Wallace, to which I, of course, at once agreed. On board the *Aragon* we met the General, and I explained that I had not applied for any commanding officers and did not want any. He called me on one side and first of all said that he thought I was treating these three officers very badly, then, that as my Brigade was now on L. of C., I was under his orders and he ordered me to take them. On this I said that in such an important matter I must respectfully decline to obey his orders, unless they reached me through my Divisional Commander. That ended the interview. Eventually Colonel Agnew, an excellent fellow, was, by de Lisle's orders, put in to command the K.O.S.B., but the Gallipoli climate was too much for him and it was not long before Stoney again resumed command.

For both officers and men the freedom from perpetual

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warfare was a welcome rest and relaxation and we did what was possible to enjoy ourselves. The ubiquitous footballs, of course, were soon on the scene, we had Brigade sports, bathing parties at the numerous sandy coves, with alfresco meals, whilst Colonel Casson and his S.W.B. were specially catered for and royally entertained by Captain Davidson, R.N., and the officers and ship's company of H.M.S. *Cornwallis*. Parties of us rode over to Castros, the capital of Lemnos, and explored the old fort there and the Greek Church, where some of us purchased old ikons, after which we lunched luxuriously at a Greek restaurant—at least it seemed luxury to us. At a restaurant I struck one of the mysteries of finance in that the proprietor took in payment a £1 note in preference to a golden sovereign; I have always wondered why. On the way back we had tea at a small restaurant attached to a so-called hotel, where there was a thermal spring, and where the proprietor had a very pretty daughter, who flirted outrageously; her name being Terpsichore and her age four years. There were many springs in the island at Lemnos and one in particular, beautiful water, bubbled up from a fountain on the hill above Mudros Harbour, the overflow from which formed a trouty-looking brook which tumbled away to the sea; I suppose there must have been *some* good reason for not making use of this water for the benefit of the troops at Mudros, though at the time it seemed a mystery.

Our holiday was all too short; rumours of a projected Turkish attack on a large scale reached G.H.Q., so that the 86th and 88th Brigades were quickly hustled back and we followed the next day. Another misfortune, comparable to that of losing the services of General Gouraud, had befallen the forces at Helles; General

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Hunter-Weston had fallen a victim to the sun, and this, aggravated by the strain of his exertions during nearly three months, had made him very ill, so that, to the everlasting regret of all the troops at Helles, and I feel sure to his own, he had had to be invalided. General Stopford, whom I had met at Mudros and thought a most charming man, took over temporary command at Helles vice Hunter-Weston invalided. On our return to the Peninsula we found ourselves in reserve, near our own Divisional Headquarters in the neighbourhood of Gully Beach.

De Lisle had remained at the scene of action and the results of his energy were apparent in the improvement of the communications, water-supply arrangements, and the almost fortress-like appearance of the "Eski Line." In addition he had had a good landing pier built out from the beach and had made arrangements with a Greek trader to bring over supplies of vegetables and fruit for the men. Our old trenches were occupied by the 13th Division commanded by my old friend and one-time commanding officer, Fred Shaw, whom I was delighted to see again. On Shaw's staff were, amongst others, Gillman, afterwards to become my C.G.S. in Mesopotamia, and Brownrigg, who had been my very efficient adjutant as lately as the spring of 1914. The 13th Division was evidently well trained and consisted of a fine body of men; I was particularly struck by the appearance of Baldwin's Brigade, which had now been some time in the trenches and had at first had the advantage of being mixed up with platoons of the 29th Division.

The 11th Division, also in occupation of part of the front line, contained a service battalion of the Sherwood Foresters, commanded by Bosanquet, an old friend and

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brother officer. Amongst other friends I was delighted to meet again was the gallant Ewin, who had been sergeant-major of my M.I. Battalion during the South African War until severely wounded, and was now a captain in this 9th Battalion, which was composed of a first-rate lot of men and was well officered. George Fielding, who had been adjutant, had, I was very sorry to hear, already been killed by a dropping bullet, when walking down a communication trench nearly 3,000 yards from the nearest Turkish trench.

The big Turkish offensive which had been so confidently expected never took place. One cannot help thinking that their Intelligence had got wind of the reinforcements arriving for us and they infinitely preferred that we should do all the attacking. During our short stay in reserve we made a large number of jam-pot bombs, the ammonal and fuse for which were provided by the Ordnance, while the missiles were Turkish shrapnel bullets collected by search parties.

Towards the end of July we again took over the same trenches on the left from the 13th Division and found the position somewhat changed, the enemy having decidedly gained the ascendancy. They had on the extreme left established themselves in trenches only about 30 yards distant from ours and even a periscope shown over the parapet was at once smashed by a bullet. The Borders took over this sector and at once set to work to dominate the Turks. Steel loopholes were made all along the parapet and, as it was soon found that the single plates were not proof against Mauser bullets (though they were against the Lee-Enfield), double plates, with a space between, had to be installed. After that if the enemy dared to throw a bomb or fire a shot, dozens of jam-pot bombs were hurled in return

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and a rapid fusillade was kept up on the opposing loopholes. The Turks were completely dominated after about two days of this treatment and one could use a periscope without being interfered with.

General Stopford left Helles to prepare for the projected landing at Suvla Bay, his place as Corps Commander being temporarily taken over by General Douglas, whilst I was appointed, also temporarily, to command Douglas's Division (42nd) in his stead. The portion of the line I was now concerned with was in the centre, including both branches of the Krithia Nullah, the Royal Naval Division being on our right and the 29th on the left. Luckily for me the Brigadiers, including Herbert Lawrence and Lord Hampden, were first-rate and the staff of the Division excellent, so I found everything working like clockwork. Doubtful as I had been of my fitness to command a division, things were made easy for me.

The new Anzac-Suvla enterprise was now on the *tapis*, and though the actual details of the scheme had been kept very secret, we all knew that some new development was in the wind and were hopeful of a pleasant change from the present *impasse*. A fresh attack was to take place at Helles, to be carried out by the 29th and 42nd Divisions.

The 29th, on a brigade front, was to attack between the West Krithia Nullah and Gully Ravine against the very strong Turkish position which had defied all assaults since it had been captured by the K.O.S.B. on the 4th June. Two brigades of the 42nd (Manchester and East Lancashire Brigades), commanded respectively by Lawrence and Hampden, were to attack on a front extending from just west of the West Krithia Nullah to a point east of the East Krithia Nullah. Other portions

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of the line were to demonstrate in order to keep the enemy tied to his trenches. The whole object of this attack was to keep the Turkish forces at Helles so busily engaged that they would not be able to spare troops to oppose the hoped-for *coup* at Anzac and Suvla.

De Lisle's task struck me as a most difficult one because, as I pointed out to him, he had to advance, at one point, into a re-entrant of the Turkish line of defence. However, he was very confident of success, saying that he would send his best battalion against that portion.

In the afternoon of the 6th August, after a somewhat meagre artillery preparation, the infantry assaulted and, as usual, things seemed to be going favourably at the start. Certainly Hampden's brigade (East Lancashire) gained their objectives with a rush, as also did Lawrence's Manchester Brigade, in so far as the ground east of the West Krithia Nullah was concerned, but west of this they failed to reach their objective. That fine Battalion, the 6th Manchesters, seized the Turkish redoubt in the nullah itself, and the reports from the forward divisional observing officer (Kershaw, G.S.O.3) continued for a time to be most favourable. Then the East Lancashires were heavily counter-attacked and driven back to their own trenches. The Manchester Brigade hung on to their gains, and as dusk fell they were still engaged in a fierce fight against heavy odds. The struggle for the Nullah redoubt and a trench on the rising ground east of it, known as the Vineyard, continued during most of the night, but when daylight came only the Vineyard position remained in our hands. There Captain Forshaw and his men had performed prodigies of valour and he was awarded the V.C. for his leading, gallantry, and determination. The 6th Manchesters stuck to the

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redoubt until they were practically annihilated and then only did the Turks regain possession.

On the left the 88th Brigade met with the fiercest resistance; very few ever reached the enemy trenches, and of those who did fewer still returned. This was the first occasion on which the Turks had ever taken any prisoners, so presumably there had been a change in the orders of their higher command as regards the giving of quarter. Apropos of this, I do not think I mentioned the fact that, during our advance on 28th April, we came across bodies of the 7th Fusiliers, evidently those of patrols captured at the landing on the 25th, and each had, as Kipling says, "a small blue hole in his forehead, and the back blown out of his head."

The fight on the 6th resulted in very heavy British casualties and one could only trust that the Turks had suffered equally. That was the end of my first Divisional Command; General Davies, my old Divisional Commander in France, had arrived to take command of the VIIIth Corps, so I returned to my Brigade, which was still occupying the left sector. In the meanwhile we had lost Casson, who, somewhat against his own wishes, had been given command of a brigade in the 52nd (Lowland) Division. He was succeeded in command of the S.W.B. by Going, who had been wounded and lately returned from hospital.

By de Lisle's orders the sappers had prepared a mine under a Turkish trench, at the side of the Ravine, in front of the position taken over by the S.W.B., and on the evening of Going's return the R.E. subaltern in charge of the mining operations came into the S.W.B. Headquarters and reported the mine to be quite ready; upon which Going said, "All right, then touch it off." No one was prepared for the subsequent upheaval;

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the mine had not been accurately situated under the enemy trench and did not destroy it, whilst the Turks promptly occupied the edge of the crater, which brought them appreciably nearer to our position. This spot was always afterwards known as "Going's Hump."

News came in of great successes attending the Anzac and Suvla operations, where desperate fighting was taking place. I believe that for a very short time complete success hung in the balance; we heard that some of Shaw's Division and a Gurkha Battalion had actually gained the crest of Sari Bair and looked down on the narrows of the Dardanelles, but were driven off by a massed Turkish counter-attack before they could consolidate the position. The flank movement at Suvla hung fire, largely due to the inexperience of the troops and the fact that General Stopford suffered from too kind a heart and failed to push, or rather drive, his tired men. The total results had been a considerable gain of ground at Anzac, but not the *vital* positions, and a lodgment at Suvla, but *below* the hills which were the real objectives. It was a tremendous disappointment to all and a tragedy for our G.O.C.-in-C., the fabric of whose carefully thought-out plans had been destroyed.

On the 15th de Lisle, who enjoyed the well-deserved reputation of being a real thruster, was ordered to go to Suvla and assume command of all the troops in this new area, whilst I took command of the 29th Division. Petre, to the general regret of the 87th Brigade, was taken away to be Brigade Major of a brigade in the 13th Division. Lucas, though there were others senior to him in the Brigade, was appointed, without a dissentient voice, to command the 87th. Wolley-Dod, who had unfortunately been invalided, was replaced in

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command of the 86th by Perceval, and Fuller took the latter's place as G.S.O.1 of the Division.

Soon after de Lisle's arrival at Suvla I received a letter from him, in which he said that he had found the state of affairs there even worse than he had expected, and was confident that only the example of his old Division would do any good. He said that he had applied for the whole Division, but that, if that was not possible, he would at least like the 87th Brigade. Meanwhile the chief exports from Suvla had consisted of generals who had either failed themselves or been failed by inexperienced troops.

I think that the real cause of the practical failure of this big effort was a divided command. This, if ever, was the time for the fleet to make a big push for the Straits, and I cannot but think that, had there been *one* Commander-in-Chief, all our strength in men, ships, and guns would have been exerted. It might even then have been a failure, but at least we should have done our utmost to force success, and I am fairly confident that this opinion was shared by many officers of the fleet at the Dardanelles.

At de Lisle's urgent request the 87th Brigade was transported to Suvla, and then on the 19th I received orders to go there myself and for the remainder of the infantry of the Division, as well as the Field Company R.E., to follow as soon as possible About 2 p.m. on the date mentioned I boarded a destroyer, bade farewell to Helles and arrived at de Lisle's Headquarters at Suvla about 3.30 p.m.

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CHAPTER VIII

STALEMATE AT SUVLA

THE conformation of Suvla was not unlike a saucer which had had a piece bitten out of one side, with the Turks holding the rim and the British troops the hollow portion. The rim on the south side was, near the break, now held by the Anzac troops and on the north by the 54th Division. This partial, very partial, occupation of the rim on each flank did not, however, interfere with, or keep any check on, enemy observation of the whole of our position, every part of which was open to the direct fire of the Turkish guns. From the farthest rim of the saucer an excrescence jutted out forming two low hills, joined by a col, and known respectively as Chocolate and Green Hills, which were in our possession. The rim on the north was known as Kiretch Tepe and, as already indicated, was partially occupied by our troops.

The bottom of the saucer consisted of a salt lake, now dry, and a certain amount of cultivation merging towards the hills into rough land covered with stunted holly oak, whilst dotted about were numerous pollarded oak trees. The hills were rough, rocky, water-worn, and covered with scrub, the flat portion was intersected by watercourses and irrigation channels, all now dry. Numerous wells and springs, however, existed throughout the area, so there was no real lack of water except on Kiretch Tepe.

De Lisle told me that G.H.Q. wanted him to attack as soon as the 29th Division arrived, and he showed me the proposals he had submitted for approval. Roughly,

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CHOCOLATE HILL.

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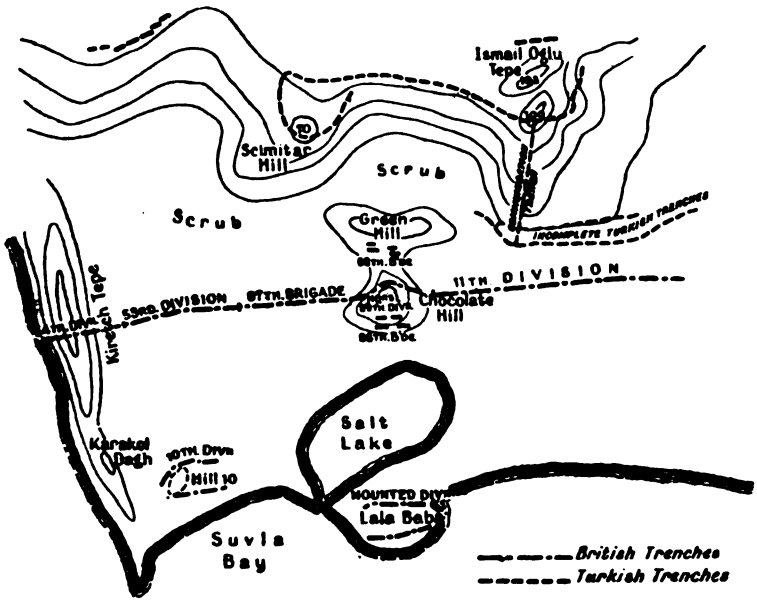

SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE THE LAST ATTACK MADE BY BRITISH TROOPS IN GALLIPOLI: SUVLA POSITION ON 21ST AUGUST, 1915

his idea was to throw his whole weight into an attack against the northern rim (Kiretch Tepe); and push on, so as to obtain good and commanding artillery positions on this flank. After my very cursory view of the whole position this struck me as the best and most feasible tactical proposition, and, after further discussion, I went up to the Karakol Dagh, the westernmost hill of the Kiretch Tepe spur, to reconnoitre the ground over which my Division would have to attack. Early next morning, however, de Lisle told me that his plan had not met with the approval of G.H.Q., who wished him to make his effort against the centre, viz. Scimitar Hill (Hill 70) and Ismail Oglu Tepe (Hill 103). The troops to carry out the assault were to consist of the 11th Division and the 29th Division on the right and left respectively.

After leaving de Lisle I went over to see Hammersley,

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commanding 11th Division, who had his Headquarters on Lala Baba, and from thence Malcolm (G.S.O.1) took me to Chocolate Hill so that I could make a personal reconnaissance of the enemy position. Lucas, with the 87th Brigade, was in trenches on and to the north of Chocolate Hill, so that he was already provided for, but the difficulty was to find any cover for the rest of the Division when it arrived. The only possible places I could see were some dead ground on the col behind Green Hill and on the reverse slope of Chocolate Hill itself.

The crux of the orders for the attack, which I received on the afternoon of the 20th, was that the assault was to be made on the front Scimitar Hill—Ismail Oglu Tepe, the spur running down from the latter to be the dividing line between the two Divisions. A preliminary move had to be made by the 11th Division to capture the Turkish trench at the foot of the spur, and the 29th had to conform to this movement by an advance to a line in front of Green Hill. During this move the artillery would lift their fire to the hills above, and after a five-minute pause the attacking lines would continue the advance on their objectives.

That evening Perceval arrived with the 86th Brigade and moved after dark to the col between Green Hill and Chocolate Hill. Cayley, with the shattered and, numerically, very weak 88th Brigade, only reached Suvla on the morning of the 21st and was moved up to a position on the reverse slope of Chocolate Hill.

It was apparent that until Scimitar Hill (70) and Ismail Oglu Tepe (103) were in our hands it would be fatal to advance into the re-entrant formed by the centre of the Turkish position. My orders detailed the 87th Brigade for the capture of Hill 70 and the 86th Brigade to advance in line with the 11th Division and assist the

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latter in the capture of Hill 103. Once these two tactical features were in our hands the rest would be easy. The sappers had constructed an observation post on Chocolate Hill to enable me to see how the attack progressed and utilize my reserves when required.

Our artillery preparation was timed to commence at 2.30 p.m., but before that hour the hostile guns were raining a shower of shells on Chocolate and Green Hills. The 88th Brigade, in the move over the open to its position, was heavily shelled, without, however, suffering many casualties. I reached my observation post in safety, but found that it was neither well sited nor well designed; still, one had to make the best of it, though I never spent a more uncomfortable four hours, being able neither to stand up nor sit down.

Our artillery preparation duly started at the hour named and, whilst one had to admit that the visibility was bad, it was the very poorest display I had yet seen; there seemed to be an utter lack of concentration on the important points. It was, in fact, a sort of pepper-pot bombardment. This dismal affair lasted for half an hour, at the end of which time the 11th Division rushed the partially finished Turkish trench in front of the spur. The few Turks who had been in occupation of it, however, escaped via the communication trench. The 86th Brigade moved down the farther slopes of Green Hill and lay down to await the general advance. I should mention that this Brigade had throughout the day been exposed to heavy shell-fire, had suffered many casualties, and, though not exactly shaken, was certainly not at its "brightest and best."

At 3.10 p.m. the general assault began. The 87th Brigade had detailed the R.I.F., supported by the Borders, for the attack on Hill 70, and in

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a dashing advance the R.I.F. swiftly reached their objective, the Turks hastily withdrawing to the crest line above.

The 11th Division pushed on from the captured enemy trench, but, by some extraordinary oversight, the communication trench was entirely neglected. From my position I could see the Turks, in some numbers, and being continually reinforced, enfilading the advancing lines from this trench. The heavy enfilade fire caused those on the right to bear away in the Anzac direction and those on the left to seek cover behind the small spurs running out from Green Hill. In fact this communication trench entirely disorganized the attack of the 11th Division.

The 86th Brigade had to make its attack through the thick scrub, which had been set on fire by the artillery bombardment and was now burning fiercely. The thick smoke prevented me from seeing how this attack progressed, but I fancy that, under such circumstances, cohesion was soon lost and it was brought to a standstill.

On Hill 70 the retirement of the enemy had not been an entirely forced one, indeed it was probably intentional. As the R.I.F. reached the trenches, the hill was raked by shrapnel and machine-gun fire from both flanks and they were literally swept off it. The enemy at once reoccupied the trenches. Nothing daunted, the second wave of the R.I.F., led by Pike, the gallant O.C., again occupied the fatal hill and engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with the defenders. Again the position was in our hands and again was it swept by the deadly cross fire. The Borders came up in support and once more was the prize ours; but no one could live in this death-trap. The S.W.B. joined the attackers in the struggle for Hill 70, but got no farther than the rim of it, and in the fading

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light one could see the Turks, outlined by the blazing scrub, standing up in their trenches and firing down the slope at the attackers.

A fresh outburst of fire from the hostile guns made me leave my observation post to ascertain the cause, and then I saw the lines of the Mounted Division advancing steadily across the flat of the dry Salt Lake, the enemy shells taking toll of them whilst they moved on as if on parade. What their orders were I do not know, but one brigade passed to the north and another to the south of Chocolate Hill, the dusk fell and I could see nothing more.

The fog of war had descended, so I left my observation post for good. I was not sorry; the strain of crouching, the only attitude possible, had given me cramp-like pain in the thighs. Two shells had burst inside the O.P., and I was choked with dust as well as having a large portion of Chocolate Hill down my back under my shirt. On the reverse slope I met Kenna, temporarily in command of the Mounted Division. He knew no more than I did how his Yeomen had progressed, but about 9 p.m. he gave me a message from Taylor, one of his Brigadiers, to say that he was in occupation of Hill 103, and that there were troops in front of him. I had seen no sign of such a glorious possibility, as long as I had been able to see anything at all, so told Kenna to send out a staff officer, with an escort, to find out the exact position. About 9.30 p.m. another message came to Kenna, this time from Wiggin, to announce that he also was on Hill 103.

This corroboration seemed to be good enough to work on, so getting hold of the O.C. Field Company R.E., Cayley, commanding the 88th Brigade, and the O.C. Reserve of the Mounted Division, I ordered them to detail working parties, carrying sand-bags, picks, and shovels, to proceed at once to Scimitar Hill (70) and

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Ismail Oglu Tepe and fortify these positions as quickly as possible. The 86th Brigade was detailed for the work on Scimitar Hill and the reserve of the Mounted Division to Ismail Oglu Tepe, half the Field Company R.E. to accompany each.

The tools and sand-bags had been issued and the parties were just moving off when the staff officer came back and reported that, so far from being on Hill 103, the Yeomen were only on the spurs of Green Hill.

It was now nearly midnight. I had been in communication with de Lisle on the telephone and he had impressed on me that Sir Ian Hamilton was most anxious that we should hang on to our gains. But we had gained nothing—certainly nothing worth having. There were many wounded lying about amongst the burning scrub, and the troops were so mixed up that there was no possibility of getting things straightened out before daybreak, so I informed de Lisle that I proposed to re-form in our original position, bring in the wounded and send the Mounted Division back to the beach. He said that, although, of course, Sir Ian would be very disappointed at the lack of result, he knew I would not give up if there were any prospect of success and he would leave the matter in my hands. I gave the necessary orders to the 29th and Mounted Divisions and have never regretted having done so.

I could not well give orders to Hammersley, who was much senior to me. Moreover, I was not in touch with his Headquarters, so that in the morning some units of his Division were still in the air. But, under our covering fire, they were able to withdraw after daylight. It had been a bad day and our losses were exceptionally heavy; the casualties in the 87th Brigade alone amounted to 50 per cent., and many gallant officers and men had made the supreme sacrifice.

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I must confess that from the inception of this attack I saw little hope of success. Had it been in the nature of a surprise it might have had a different ending. A fortnight previously when a brigade walked, without opposition, on to Scimitar Hill and then, so report said, went back to the beach to bathe and get a hot meal, it would have been easy. The inertia displayed during the first few days at Suvla seems to have been unbelievable and the golden gifts of opportunity, created by surprise, had been thrown away with both hands.

By this time the enemy had brought up all his available reinforcements, had entrenched himself on dominating positions and was well supplied with artillery and shells. Only a really devastating artillery preparation could have given the infantry a prospect of reaching and holding their objectives and, as I have said, this was practically futile in its effect, due partly to lack of shells and bad visibility, but also somewhat to lack of experience on the part of the newly arrived artillery.

In my humble opinion de Lisle's original intention of a concentrated attack along Kiretch Tepe had quite the best chance of achieving good results, but G.H.Q. still retained hopes of capturing Sari Bair and Khoja Chemen Tepe, in order to dominate the Narrows, and from this point of view the capture of Ismail Oglu Tepe was an essential preliminary.

Byng arrived from France to take command of the Suvla area (IXth Corps), de Lisle reassumed command of the 29th and I was appointed to the permanent command of the 53rd (Welsh) Division. This I took over from Herbert Lawrence, who had been acting in command of it since the departure of General Lindley. Lawrence had taken Carter, of the Dorsetshire Yeomanry, to act as his A.D.C., and I was fortunate enough in this

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way to secure the really ideal man for the post. He stayed with me for the remainder of the war, though it was only by some persuasion that I kept him from rejoining his Yeomanry Regiment, and to his devoted service I owed much.

Lala Baba was our fate as a Headquarters and the seashore our resting-place. In fact, this small hill became the abode of many Divisional Headquarters (at one time there were four of them there) besides sheltering numerous troops, guns, transport, and stores. When I say "sheltering," I do not mean to give the impression of it being in any way immune from fire; indeed, when the enemy had a surplus of shells and nothing better to do with them, he plastered Lala Baba with much vigour and at such times we took to our burrows.

When I took over the 53rd two of the brigades were occupying trenches to the north of Chocolate Hill, and one was in reserve, on some sand-hills near the beach, to the north of the Salt Lake. Cape was G.S.O. (1) of the Division and Penno the A.Q.M.G., and, never before having had any experience of the administrative details of a Territorial Division, I found Penno a decided asset. All except one of the original Brigadiers had disappeared, the exception being Hume, whom I had known some years previously when he was in command of the Connaught Rangers. The others were now Butler, taken from command of a regiment of the Mounted Division, and Mott, from the staff of the same formation, both quite excellent. Hume was already a sick man and soon had to be invalided, being replaced by Cowans, one of the original Brigadiers, who had been wounded at the Suvla landing early in August.

The day after assuming command Carter took me

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down to the trenches, and on the way we noted the results of some of the earlier fighting, part of the ground we crossed being littered with rifles, ammunition, entrenching tools, and equipment of all descriptions. I later sent out parties from the Reserve Brigade to collect all this stuff, but they were evidently not adepts at clearing a battlefield, and in the course of our daily visits Carter and I must have gleaned after them a wagon-load of debris.

First of all we went to Butler's Headquarters, which were on the left, and made our way through his trenches until we found Hume and saw the whole of his line. The impression left on my mind was that the men looked cowed and entirely lacked the smartness of Regulars. Still they seemed a good stamp of man and the trenches were clean and well made. (As a matter of fact, I found that the trenches had been laid out by my old Brigade, which had been mixed up with the 53rd Division in order to instruct them in this work.) I had a long talk with Hume, who told me that all the best battalions in the Division had been taken away for France, and that many of those now serving in it were 2nd- and 3rd-line Territorial Units which had only received rifles a few days before the Division sailed for Gallipoli; that they had had very little previous training of any kind—indeed, it seemed to have chiefly consisted of digging trenches on the East Coast of England.

The Division had been landed at Suvla on 8th August, not as a complete unit but just anyhow. By brigades and battalions they had been ordered forward to seize certain positions. A few well-concealed Turkish snipers had fired on them. Neither officers nor men could see any enemy. Their training was quite insufficient to enable them to push out skirmishers in order to clear

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out the snipers; so though there was no cover they lay down and opened fire—at nothing. Death from an utterly invisible enemy continued to take heavy toll, and eventually many ran for the beach. It was a bad start and the feeling throughout the Division had been one of hopelessness. Hume thought, however, that the men were now beginning to find their feet, and said that even the few days of association with the 87th Brigade had done them quite a lot of good.

After hearing all this, one could only wonder how the responsible authorities at home could have ventured to send out such an untrained formation to take part in so strenuous a campaign as that in Gallipoli. Had the Division been sent to France it would not even have been put into trenches unless mixed up with experienced troops, and it would certainly never have been asked to carry out an attack until at least it had undergone a course of training behind the lines. There was no "behind the lines" in Gallipoli and neither time nor opportunity to train.

Two short stories will tend to show the state of training. One day, soon after assuming command, I was making my way along the front-line trenches when I noticed a man peeping through a loophole. I said to him, "You are a sniper, I suppose." To which he replied in the affirmative. Getting up on the fire-step I looked over the parapet and, outlined between two bushes, I saw the figure of a Turkish officer, about sixty yards away. It took me quite some time to get the "sniper" to see the Turk, but eventually he said he saw him. He proceeded to load his rifle and this also was a lengthy and evidently unaccustomed performance; then he pushed the muzzle through the loophole, pulled the trigger and hit the ground some 6 yards in front of the parapet.

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Another day I had stopped to talk to some of the men when a party, consisting of a corporal and six men fully equipped, came past. Imagining this to be a guard relief, I took no notice. Some eighty yards farther along the trench, where there was a bend in the line, I passed this party halted but continued on my way without comment. Very soon a rattle of musketry caused me to look over the parapet to ascertain the cause. There I saw the party referred to moving over the absolutely open "No man's land," and being heavily fired at. First of all they ran together, evidently confused; then one wise man lay down and the others followed his example. I sent a staff officer to find out the cause of this amazing performance, and learned that the Brigadier had issued orders for the ground in front to be kept under close observation and regularly patrolled. Of course he meant the patrolling to be done at night, but it only shows how very explicit orders must be when given to untrained officers.

I have been expatiating on the lack of military training of both officers and men in the Division, but in many ways their work in the trenches was good. Could we have been left there, I think that the Division would have developed into being able to repel any Turkish attack. But, within a fortnight, the 13th Division, now commanded by Maude, vice Shaw invalided, took over our section of the defensive line and we were relegated to reserve. As a matter of fact, the only place where one could possibly train the men was in the front-line trenches. The worst place was in so-called "reserve," where it was impossible to assemble any body of men without getting them severely shelled. Training therefore was practically out of the question.

We were deputed to entrench a final line of resistance

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in the Lala Baba area and to our lot fell most of the labour of unloading stores from lighters during the hours of darkness. The congestion on Lala Baba of both men and animals had rendered it perhaps the most insanitary spot on earth; still it was up to me to improve matters. Proudfoot, my sanitary officer, had sound ideas and we started the deep-trench or cess-pit system. By excluding light and possibility of flies this system proved a great success, and by dint of much work and trouble we really cleansed the Lala Baba area to a great extent, though I cannot honestly say that we eliminated the plague of flies.

Cowans fell a victim to the prevailing disease, locally known as Gallipolitis, and Hare, who had commanded the covering force at the original landing on 25th April and been severely wounded, was appointed in his place. I was very pleased to get him as a Brigade Commander, though it somehow seemed unfair that the accident of his wound should have resulted in his now playing second fiddle to me.

Sir Ian Hamilton most kindly insisted on my going to stay with him at Imbros and he and his personal staff gave me a warm welcome there. The Headquarters of the G.O.C.-in-C. was certainly not on a luxurious scale, consisting as it did of bell tents pitched on a sandy waste, but, unless an hostile aeroplane arrived on the scene, it was at least free from shell-fire. As far as possible I avoided the subject of the action of 21st August, though I fancied they would have liked to have had my version of it. I knew that if the subject opened I should be sure to criticize various points, so I thought it best left alone. In a long chat with Braithwaite he led me to understand that there was something in the wind which would alter the present state of stalemate on

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the Peninsula (presumably he referred to, what is now well known, the proposal to land a large French force, under General Sarrail, in Asia). I must confess that for some time the position had been one which may be shortly described as "Get on or get out."

When at Imbros I rode over to the capital of the island and, after lunch at a restaurant, asked the waiter, a Greek, who spoke good American, whether there was anything worth seeing in the neighbourhood. He informed me that that very day there was a great "Festa" at Castros, two miles farther on, and that, if I went there, I should see some beautiful dancing. With visions of the dances of ancient Greece in my mind I went, and this is what I saw. Two bands, a short distance apart and each playing different airs, discoursed melancholy dirges, whilst the local islanders, old men, old women, and small girls, having linked hands, walked solemnly round in a circle. No national costume, no picturesqueness, no nothing; presumably they were enjoying themselves, but they certainly did not show it. I wonder if there are pretty girls in the Greek islands? The only one I saw was Terpsichore and she was very young.

Soon after my return to Suvla we were relieved in the trenches by the 13th Division and relegated to reserve. Maude on taking over paid us the compliment of saying they were the cleanest lines he had ever had. Mott's Brigade went to the Karakol Dagh and was much better off than the other two. Mott was very good at getting the best out of his men, and I think also particularly lucky in his commanding officers, so that his Brigade rapidly improved.

What amazed me about the Territorial officer was his failure to realize that his special job was the training and care of his men. Time after time I used to find that

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working parties had been sent out in the morning without having been given a meal, and in other ways the Territorials were just as bad. Neither officers nor men realized that "an order" was something to be obeyed promptly and without question; the meaning of that important word "Discipline" was unknown to them. not that I think the 53rd Division was exceptional in this respect; in the nature of things strict discipline is difficult to enforce amongst voluntary Territorial units, though it is the corner stone of military efficiency.

For instance, I had given an order that working parties, engaged in digging the Lala Baba defences, should, unless in very inclement weather, work in shirt sleeves. That sounds simple and even sensible. The following day, on visiting the defences the first thing that caught my eye was a party, under the charge of a young officer, working not only with their coats but even their great-coats on. It was a bright and even hot day, so I asked the officer whether the order above-mentioned had been brought to his notice; when he answered that it had, I said: "Then why is it not being obeyed?" On which he paralysed me by saying earnestly: "Well, I assure you, sir, it is not for want of telling the men!"

For a time Mott's Brigade was lent to General Peyton and went into part of the trench line held by the Mounted Division. Though temporarily removed from my command, I, with Peyton's permission, frequently went down to see them and noted that the Brigade was a greatly improving unit and doing good work in the front line. The trenches occupied by this Brigade lay on both sides of the Azmak Dere, a dry watercourse about forty yards broad. Across the bed of this a strong and loop-holed sand-bag parapet had been built, whilst about eighty yards upstream the Turks had a similar one. Below our parapet

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a dump of stores and ammunition had been formed, so I said to Mott that I did not think it was sound, in view of the probability of getting rain soon, to have this material in the river bed. He said, "Oh, do you think we should get much water down this?" To which I replied: "I suppose about ten feet." I also suggested that he might consult Peyton about having breaks made in the parapet. However, though the stores were moved, no alteration was made in the parapet and this latter had serious results.

Gallipolitis went on taking continuous toll of the personnel of the Division, and many, who were not actually evacuated sick, were feeling the weakening effects of this fly-borne trouble. With no reinforcements arriving and a large daily sick-roll our numbers were rapidly diminishing; in fact before the catastrophe of the blizzard we were not much stronger than a brigade. The weather was becoming more unsettled and south-westerly storms were, though not very violent, disastrous to some of the craft in Suvla Bay, particularly to the big lighters, called locally "Beetles." The "Beetles" were capable of carrying 500 men and had been sent out originally for the Suvla landing; afterwards they were used for landing stores at the various beaches. Each was equipped with a small engine and could go under its own steam; the anchor provided was capable of holding it against a light breeze, but in a strong wind the anchor dragged and the "Beetle" drifted ashore. I remember one day remarking to a naval officer that it seemed a pity that they should not be provided with more efficient anchors so that they could ride out a storm. He replied that "as they only had a rating of four, it was not possible to have a bigger anchor." I did not say anything more, but it seemed to me that it would have been decidedly more

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economical to have a larger anchor capable of doing its job and increasing the rating accordingly. Sometimes it was possible to get the stranded "Beetles" towed off, but by no means was this always so, and derelicts became common objects of the seashore.

Undoubtedly the greatest asset that Suvla had received was General Byng. Very sound, very cheery, he did more than anyone else could have done to keep things up to the mark, whilst the politicians vacillated between the only two possible alternatives, "Get on" or "Get out."

Luckily the enemy was in no mood to carry out any serious attack; whatever lack of strategical result the campaign had had, at least the spirit of the Turkish army was at a low ebb and the flower of it had been destroyed.

Then came news of a new expedition to Salonika and that two British Divisions (10th and 53rd) and one French Division were to be sent from the Gallipoli force.

The move of the 53rd was eventually cancelled, but the others did actually go and, from all one heard, the Turks welcomed their departure. I remember hearing that enemy aviators flew on the following day over the French lines at Helles on purpose to drop leaflets, which contained appeals to the Senegalese and other French Colonials to desert *en masse* to the Turks, now that they had been abandoned to their fate by the white troops.

Then came rumours of evacuation followed shortly by the recall of General Sir Ian Hamilton. This was a bitter blow to all who believed in the strategical importance of the Gallipoli campaign. Sir Ian had throughout shown moral courage of the highest order (I say nothing about his personal and physical courage, because that had throughout his brilliant career been a well-established fact). Always short of men, short of guns and, more than

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all, short of ammunition for the guns he had, he did all that mortal man could do to force a successful issue. Whatever disappointments befell, whether through poor leadership or inexperienced troops, he always kept outwardly a smiling and cheerful demeanour. He was lavish in his praise to his troops over any small success and he gave credit to everyone except himself. I feel sure that few could have commanded an army in an amphibious expedition such as this with less friction than he did; as a matter of fact, there was no friction that I ever heard of between the Royal Navy and the Army. One cannot help feeling that there must have been points of difference, and that the expedition was extremely lucky in having Admiral de Robeck and General Sir Ian Hamilton as co-equal chiefs to run its destiny.

In recounting my own personal reminiscences there may be criticisms of superior officers, but I should like to record that whatever my thoughts were I refrained from criticizing during the campaign. Both in France and Gallipoli the "break through" theory was a fatal one. Had the better theory of the "limited objective" and "continuous offensive" been adopted I feel certain that at least the Achi Baba position would soon have been in the hands of the Helles forces. That, however, though it would have mitigated many inconveniences, was at the best only a stepping-stone; beyond that lay the immense natural fortress of Kilid Bahr, an infinitely more difficult problem. Given the troops and the guns, above all unlimited H.E. shells, and I am confident that, under Sir Ian's leadership, Constantinople would have soon been in our hands. But none of these things were supplied. There were no doubt influential officials and members of the War Cabinet who believed that knocking Turkey out of the war was the easiest and quickest way of shortening

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it, but I fancy they were in a decided minority. Most of the foremost soldiers were opposed to any deviation from the Western Front, and Lord K., who really believed in the world-wide effect which would be produced by a successful issue to the Gallipoli campaign, was forced to starve the expedition of most of the essentials necessary to success.

General Birdwood was appointed to chief command until the new G.O.C.-in-C., Sir Charles Monro, could arrive on the scene of action. The troops, as the pawns of that remarkably undecided body known as the Dardanelles Committee, were retained in a state of masterly inactivity and continued therefore to go sick at an alarming rate. An army in being must do something or crumble away.

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CHAPTER IX

SUVLA EVACUATED

ONE French Division having left Helles, *en route* for Salonika, Sir Ian Hamilton had deemed it advisable to send a brigade, from the 29th Division, to that area, in order to provide a stiffening of Regular troops. The 87th Brigade was selected for this purpose and, on arrival, attached to the 52nd (Lowland) Division commanded by that fine soldier, Herbert Lawrence. To replace the brigade, the newly landed Newfoundland contingent (destined later to make such a splendid reputation for itself in France) was absorbed into the 29th Division. My old Brigade had not been long at Helles before the sad news reached me that Stoney, commanding K.O.S.B., had been killed, whilst in his dug-out, by a chance shell fired from Asia. It was a real tragedy that he, who had gone through the most severe of the fighting without a scratch, should have met his death in such an unfortunate way. This gallant and capable officer was a grievous loss both to his Battalion and the whole army.

Sir Ian had gone and Birdwood was still acting in command when Lord K. came out, presumably to see for himself exactly what the situation in the Peninsula was and whether a winter campaign was a feasible proposition. To the best of my knowledge he did not land at Suvla, though I believe he did so at Helles. What his conclusions were we never knew, but it was apparent to all that, unless we could gain possession of the Achi

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Baba position from Helles as well as capture the high ground at Suvla, the prospects of a winter campaign held no bright outlook for the allied forces. Bulgaria having cast in her lot with Turkey and the Central Powers, there was now a straight run for guns, munitions, and supplies to Constantinople. The Turks no longer needed to keep troops on the Bulgarian frontier and, with Serbia crushed, large Bulgar forces were available to assist Turkey. Even admitting that the enemy infantry had lost their zest for attack, our present position, with the beaches under shell-fire and the prospect of months of doubtful weather conditions, was, to my mind, an impossible one to maintain.

General Byng had most wisely resisted persuasion to attack at Suvla unless given the requisite amount of ammunition, and this was not and never had been forthcoming. Now, with the additional burden of Salonika, it was even less likely to be provided. Still, so far as we knew, a winter campaign was in prospect, and schemes were on foot for housing such reserves as there were. An engineer, who knew things about mining camps in Alaska and such-like wintry spots, drew up plans for enormous dug-outs capable of holding some 800 men each. These were to be roofed over and sleeping accommodation arranged by means of tiers of berths. His plans were approved by G.H.Q. and we even started digging these atrocities. The engineer in question did not seem to have realized quite what the effect of a really big shell landing on the roof of one of these palaces would be, though such a contingency was not only possible but extremely probable. In the course of the excavating work a number of old coins, pottery, and other antiquities were found; in fact, I imagine that in past times Lala Baba had been a seaport and the present

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shallow or dry salt lake a safe harbour for trading vessels.

One can hardly write of Suvla without a word of admiration for that patient and uncomplaining hero the Indian drabi, not forgetting his mules. The Bharatpur Transport Corps, under command of an Indian officer, had its habitat on Lala Baba. Its lines (or stables) dug out from the side of the hill, and properly traversed against oblique fire, were well sited, though, even so, occasional shells did take toll of man and beast. The Indian, having the gift of working with mud, keeps such open-air stables in first-rate order, and these were quite excellent. At dusk every evening the mules were harnessed and off went the long line of A.T. carts to draw supplies from the depots, afterwards proceeding towards the front-line trenches to make the distribution to the different units. Although, for some unknown reason, the enemy did not seem to care about using his shells during the hours of darkness, there were always plenty of bullets flying about, but of these the drabi, huddled in his blanket, took not the slightest heed and always punctually delivered the goods. Probably he had to make more than one journey, so that his work lasted most of the night, and yet he seemed to be still at work during most of the following day, grooming his mules, cleaning his harness and standings, disposing of litter, and doing much mud-plastering.

Sir Charles Monro arrived to assume the chief command and, after visiting Helles, Anzac, and Suvla, where he conferred with the Corps Commanders, evidently made up his mind that the best thing to do was to evacuate Gallipoli and abandon the whole enterprise. I fancy that his considered opinion received the support of Lord K. At all events for a time supplies

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no longer arrived and the surplus stores were consumed until only provision for about six days remained.

General Byng told me that, as my Division had dug the final line of defence in the Lala Baba area, he thought it only fair that we should hold it to the last in case of evacuation being finally decided on. I was not altogether sure that I greatly appreciated the honour he proposed to confer on us, especially when he added that he would leave us the 5-in. howitzers to assist in the last stand.

Then, presumably, other influences swayed the War Cabinet and lurid pictures were drawn for the edification of the members thereof, of "British soldiers being butchered like sheep on the blood-stained beaches of Gallipoli." Whatever the cause of the change of mind, it was evident for a time that Sir Charles Monro's considered opinion was to be ignored and all thoughts of evacuation abandoned. Orders were received to fill up the depots as soon as possible with thirty days' supplies for men and animals, and every night and all night long the weary men worked at unloading lighters and piling up the dumps of stores until the task was complete.

On 26th November a full gale was blowing from the south-west bringing with it a heavy driving rain, and the usual sight was seen of "Beetles" being driven ashore, and also the unusual spectacle of a destroyer drifting on to the rocks and becoming a wreck. I had to go over to see General Byng on this day, and the walk with Carter over to Corps Headquarters in the hurricane was decidedly hard work; by the time we got back we were both drenched to the skin. That night the rain fell in torrents and caused floods everywhere. The formerly dry nullahs became raging torrents, sweeping all before them. The hitherto nearly dry Salt Lake

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became a sheet of water and the whole of our trench system in the low ground was flooded.

I have already alluded to the Azmak Dere and the parapets (Turkish and our own) built across the bed of this nullah. That night, when the water came down with a rush, it first of all piled up against the Turkish parapet until this gave way with the weight of the water. Then the pent-up flood surged down on our more strongly built parapet with dire effect, the dammed-up water rushing down our trench line on both sides and drowning men and officers in their dug-outs. Even the Brigadier, Mott, had a narrow escape from sharing this fate, for, being caught in his dug-out by the flood, he had to cut his way through the roof to escape. But the casualties from drowning were not confined to this brigade of the 53rd Division; the whole of the trench system was flooded and those who escaped the worse fate were at the best soaked to the skin. Luckily the enemy was in like evil case, and a virtual truce, though not proclaimed, took place.

The following day the wind shifted to the north, whilst the rain changed first to cutting sleet, then to snow, and the temperature dropped to considerably below freezing-point. Peyton had chosen this time to relieve Mott's Brigade in the front-line trenches, and we had to do what we could to arrange some sort of accommodation for it on the already congested area of Lala Baba. Unfortunately I had selected this very inopportune moment to indulge in one of my periodic attacks of influenza, so I was unable personally to look after the Brigade. However, when informed that it had not arrived at dawn, I sent Carter and Proudfoot to find out where it had got to and what state the men were in. The report they brought back was so bad that I

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ordered every available officer and man to go out, with all the stretchers they could collect, and get every unfit man to the Field Hospitals. Some, alas, had gone to sleep in that bitter cold never to wake again, but, thanks to the exertions of the medical officers and hospital orderlies, many recovered who might otherwise have succumbed to exhaustion.

The 53rd Division had never received any reinforcements since its landing in August, and, though its casualties in action had not been really severe, as reckoned by Gallipoli standards, the men had been dispirited from the start. The regimental officers, owing to lack of experience, were not, as a general rule, good at looking after their men, and partly for this reason, but more on account of swarms of flies bringing with them the prevailing "Gallipolitis" and its more severe form, dysentery, casualties owing to sickness had brought the Division down to the strength of a brigade. The blizzard had put the finishing touch to those who, though weak and ill, were still sticking it out and the Division was now a mere skeleton. Accordingly I applied for it to be relieved from Gallipoli, sent to a decent climate such as Egypt, brought up to strength, and given its artillery, so that it might be properly trained as a fighting unit.

General Byng recommended these proposals and they were eventually approved by G.H.Q. But by this time the War Cabinet had faced the music, and the evacuation of Anzac and Suvla had been definitely decided on, though Helles was still to be retained, presumably as a sop to the Admiralty die-hards. Byng informed me of this and said that, though the 53rd Division would embark *en route* to Egypt on the following day, he wanted me to remain behind to organize and conduct the evacuation of the Lala Baba area, for which purpose

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I could retain two staff officers of my Division to assist. I therefore decided to keep Crookenden and Derry in addition to Carter. We sent away with the Division such kit as we had, merely retaining a blanket apiece and the clothes we stood in.

Almost as soon as the Division had gone, we started preparing for the final evacuation. Most of my work was in conjunction with Maude, and I could not have had a more able nor pleasanter coadjutor; as a fact all the tactical arrangements for the withdrawal from the front line were in his capable hands, while my duties started at Lala Baba itself. A message from Corps Headquarters, about a week before the final day of evacuation, informed me that I had been appointed to command the 27th Division (then *en route* to Salonika), but that the Corps Commander still wished to retain me until the completion of the evacuation. As I very much doubted my own capability to train a division, and did not know whether or no the 53rd would be brought up to full strength and given the necessary time and opportunity to train, I was rejoiced at my good fortune in getting command of what everyone who knew it said was a magnificent division.

Gradually mules, horses, guns, wagons were withdrawn and shipped quietly away during the hours of darkness. Byng was rather inclined to make a present of the 5-inch howitzers to the enemy, but was eventually prevailed on to let them go. Certainly they were both obsolete and useless weapons, and the bottom of the sea would have been a suitable place in which to store them, but had they been left the Turks could have paraded them as captured guns—an unpleasant thought. Hospital personnel and equipment were sent away but the tents left standing. I wanted to destroy the tents

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by rotting the canvas by means of the fumes of chloride of lime, but this was not approved; perhaps rightly. Certainly the enemy had been most punctilious in his respect for the Red Cross, and as we could not take the tents, they might still serve to shelter sick or wounded Turks. The immense dumps of stores near the beach were prepared for demolition and built up with central flues. Amongst other things there were about 1,000 tins of petrol which could not be taken away, and these were divided up amongst the various dumps so that each could be saturated on the final night and thus ensure a complete holocaust of the stores. We even went so far as to rip up all sand-bags in trenches or dug-outs: in fact, with the exception of the hospital tents, there was eventually little left for the enemy to garner in the Suvla area.

Until the penultimate day there was practically no evidence apparent to the enemy that we were about to evacuate, but at that time aerial reconnaissance would have shown the disappearance of all animals and vehicles. Luckily the Turks did not possess an air service worthy of the name and our secret had been well kept. Curiously enough during the night of the 18th December, on which all the men except a minimum garrison for the trenches were sent away, the reports received from the front were to the effect that the enemy was evidently very busily engaged in putting up wire and strengthening his defences. The parties withdrawn from the front line had arrived at their points of assembly in perfect order; had thence filed down to the two beaches, 400 at a time, to be embarked on "Beetles" and conveyed to the waiting transports, all in silence and without any hitch or delay. By daylight the transports had disappeared and a thin but

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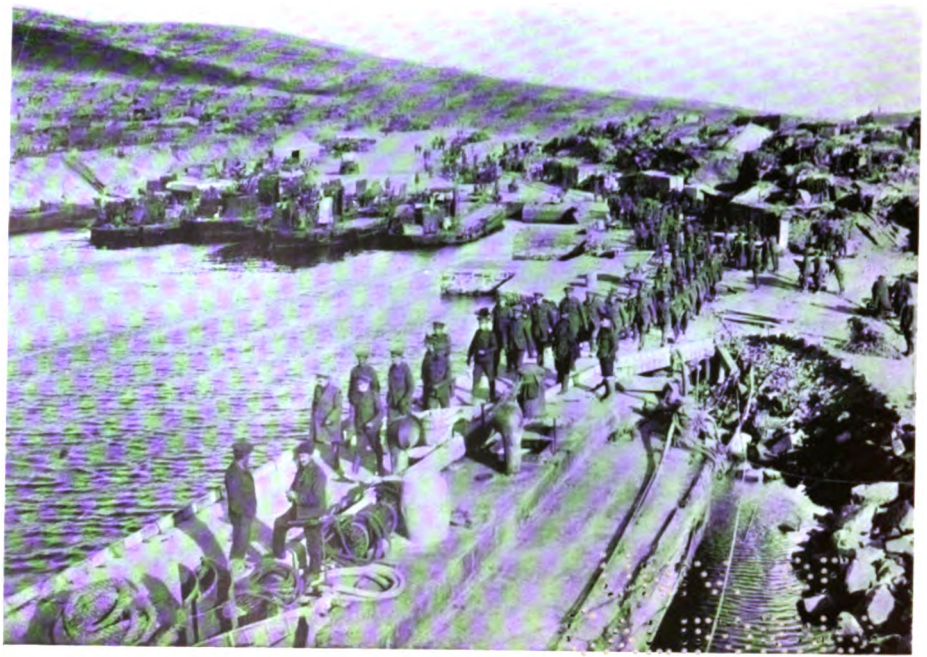

SCENE ON WEST BEACH, SUVLA, BEFORE THE EVACUATION.

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active line held the trenches, and made as much display as if the full garrison had been still in position.

On the final day (19th) I had two rather anxious moments. The first was when the enemy proceeded to register the beaches with 5·9 howitzers (with the third shot they hit the pier, which the Australian bridging train had constructed at Lala Baba, but the breach was quickly repaired), and one thought that the Turks had at last got an inkling of what was going on and would heavily shell the beaches that night. To guard against any panic in such a contingency, and prevent a rush from the points of assembly, I arranged with Maude to have a strong force of men to act as military police and check any such tendency.

The second was when the transports, which should have come into the Bay after dark, steamed in about 4 p.m. during broad daylight and at once became busy with pinnaces, which started buzzing about the harbour and going to the beaches. This display, however, evidently confirmed the enemy in his preconceived idea that we were about to launch an attack in force. Indeed, so busy was he in improving his defences during the final night that his rifle-fire slackened off to a very appreciable extent.

The troops remaining to be embarked from the two Lala Baba beaches were some of the Indian Brigade from the Anzac area, a remnant of the Mounted Division, and the final contingent of the 13th Division. Maude had made the most careful arrangements for withdrawal so that there should be no possibility of any man being left behind. Without a sound parties arrived at the points of concentration, thence filed to the beaches, 400 at a time, walked on board the waiting "Beetles" and were conveyed to the transports. The weather

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was perfect throughout and a nearly full moon gave its friendly assistance to the operation: in fact, the conditions throughout remained ideal.

At 4.30 a.m. the last of the Suvla forces, from the Lala Baba area, had filed on board the last "Beetle" and Maude and I were still on the pier when the whole sky was lit up with a blaze of light. The sappers detailed to set fire to the stores were ten minutes in advance of their scheduled time and the petrol-soaked dumps were sending up enormous flames. Not even then did the enemy open fire, so we stepped on board and reached our transport in safety. Rowing boats and pinnaces brought off the incendiary party and away we went for Imbros. I stood on deck watching the huge fires doing their work of destruction and bade, so far as I was concerned, a last farewell to Gallipoli. I had been there for eight months and had been extremely lucky throughout. Beyond a slight wound at the beginning and a bout of influenza at the end I had remained perfectly fit all the time; even "Gallipolitis" had passed me by.

We were turning our backs on a task we had failed to carry through and this went against the grain, but I was convinced that under all the circumstances the decision to evacuate was absolutely right. From the very start the magnitude of the task had been seriously under-estimated and the preparations for it had been sketchy to the verge of folly. To bring off a *coup* in war the element of surprise must be there, and, if one intends to attack a position, one certainly should not inform the enemy of the fact by making preliminary demonstrations against it with inadequate forces. This, however, had been done by the naval authorities, and to make matters worse the Press had openly announced our destination to all the world. The expeditionary

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force was landed in Egypt, and in this land, open to the spies of all enemy nations, how could the plans remain secret? The *Egyptian Gazette* even openly discussed the approaching campaign and the projected landing. Then again Sir Ian Hamilton was left without his administrative staff until a very few days before the M.E.F. sailed for Mudros. No detailed information as regards the terrain of Gallipoli was available and even the maps issued were both inaccurate and misleading.

As to the merits or demerits of an expedition with two co-equal Commanders-in-Chief opinions may differ, but I would rather have seen an Admiral in chief command with a first-rate military staff, or a General with a good naval staff, in their stead. In view of what really happened I am bound to say that the spirit of concord and mutual assistance left little or nothing to be desired, but then we were extremely lucky in the personalities of the two Commanders-in-Chief.

There are grave doubts as to the soundness of the tactical scheme for the original landings on 25th April. When we were taken round in a cruiser a few days before the actual landing, the point that most impressed itself on my mind was that one division was altogether too small a force to land at Helles, and that it would be lost in that extent of ground. I fancy it would have been better to have employed the whole force there, the French Corps to land and hold the Asiatic side, the Anzacs and 29th Division to seize and hold the Achi Baba position. The flank attack on the enemy positions could have come later. The Achi Baba position could only be a stepping-stone, as beyond it lay the very much more formidable Kilid Bahr, but we should have had elbow room from the start and our beaches would have been protected from enemy shell-fire.

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As the scheme of landing actually stood, the covering troops of the 29th should have been on shore an hour before daybreak and their first objective should have been the protection of the beaches to ensure space for the landing of the main body. If one or more beaches proved failures they could have been given up and successes at others exploited to the full. The River Clyde or "Wooden Horse," though ingenious, was the means of committing a large force to inaction throughout the day of the 25th and was, in addition, a costly death-trap. The number of senior officers killed and wounded at the landing militated against that extra push which, despite the handicaps, might have induced greater success and saved twenty-four hours of invaluable time.

The attack on the 28th April, laboured under many disadvantages. It lacked depth; the troops were suffering from want of sleep; naval guns are not adapted for the support of infantry, and very few guns of the divisional artillery had been landed and fewer still able to come into action. And yet the day only just missed being a success.

From the very start Anzac had been an anxiety, and it was truly a marvel how those gallant Australians and New Zealanders lived and kept up their spirits and *moral* under the conditions prevailing there. Their trenches hardly reached farther inland than the edge of the cliffs, which were honeycombed with holes where those not actually in the firing-line lived like a colony of jackdaws. The beach was under constant shell-fire, and even rifle-fire. There was no water except that brought by sea. The men were always at work during the hours of darkness in unloading stores and carrying them up the steep and zigzag paths. They were

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incessantly being attacked and suffering heavy casualties. Yet they never lost their daring and dash, and were always ready to carry out any desperate enterprise. Small wonder that the name of Anzac remains a proud memory throughout the British Empire!

After the first attacks at Helles the shortage of munitions for our artillery was, to say the least of it, deplorable. We were in such a position that we had to advance or go altogether; but, unless we could keep up a perpetual offensive, our advances, such as they were, were of small import. There is little value in taking one, two, or even three lines of hostile trenches, if then, having exhausted all your ammunition in the effort, you have to wait for weeks whilst the enemy digs more and more trenches; in fact your big effort has merely provided work for the unemployed. The authorities at home could never have been more than half-hearted about the Dardanelles, and I fancy that only a few were confirmed believers in the theory of knocking Turkey out of the war. The majority of prominent soldiers were against anything which might interfere with the Western Front, so the Westerners had their way and we suffered.

Whether the Achi Baba position could have been secured by a surprise flank attack in combination with a heavy frontal attack I do not know, but I think it might have been possible. I volunteered early in July to make the attempt with my Brigade, viz. to land before daybreak behind the position, whilst the 52nd, Naval, and French Divisions delivered their attack in front; but de Lisle did not like the idea, so it never came to anything.

Sir Ian's well-conceived and surprise attack early in August very nearly succeeded, and, I think, would

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have done so completely had his Suvla divisions consisted of more experienced troops. Far be it from me to decry these divisions. One could not wish to see a finer body of men and later in the war they proved their fitness for any enterprise. But they had not yet felt their feet, and new formations must be entered as gradually as possible into the great game of war, otherwise they may fail to make good.

The campaign will presumably be counted as a failure because its main objective was never achieved, but it had its use in the world-war. It destroyed the flower of the Turkish Army, and kept that army pinned to the Peninsula, thus averting pressure from Egypt and Mesopotamia; anyhow, it taught us all many lessons about combined sea and land operations. Our own losses were heavy indeed, but not nearly so high as those of the enemy, and, as it seems that war nowadays has developed into one of attrition, that point must count as a moral (or should one say, immoral?) victory.

I remember my orderly, an old soldier belonging to the Borders, telling me afterwards that when the men landed they never expected to get out again alive, and yet no one, to look at them, would have suspected that such a thought had ever entered their heads. I think what impressed me most about the battalions in my own Brigade were their marvellous powers of recuperation. A battalion would lose 60 per cent. in one day, and yet remain a fighting unit; drafts received to fill up the ranks would be at once absorbed into the battalion and its traditions, and there once more was the same splendid unit ready to go anywhere and do anything. How could that happen with new formations? Regimental traditions and regimental pride are very great

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assets to the British Army, and would-be reformers would do well to bear this in mind and respect them.

I am very proud to have once had the honour to command the Border Brigade, and I never was able to say which was the best battalion in it; South Wales Borderers, King's Own Scottish Borderers, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the Border Regiment were all equally good. The Gallipoli Peninsula is indeed honoured by the presence on it of the graves of the brave officers and men of these battalions who there made the last and greatest sacrifice. I also take pride in the fact that so good a judge as General de Lisle took the 87th Brigade as a model for the whole Division to live up to. In fact I am more proud of having commanded this Brigade than of any higher command to which I succeeded during the war.

But to continue the story. We reached Imbros early and disembarking went ashore and had breakfast with the hospitable and cheery George MacMunn, then Chief Staff Officer on Lines of Communication. There we met most of the Anzac Generals—Birdwood, Godley, Walker, etc.—all, I really think, quite pleased to have seen the last of their insalubrious abode, though I doubt if they would have admitted the soft impeachment. The harbour at Imbros bore the appearance of a naval knacker's yard (if there is such a thing), and never have I beheld so many wrecks in so small a space. I did not, however, stay there long, and after bidding farewell to Crookenden and Derry, whose valuable assistance had made my work during the evacuation almost a sinecure, Carter and I went off to Mudros in the same ship as Maude and his staff.

The 13th Division had received the news that it was to proceed to Helles, and though some were not

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exactly jubilant at the prospect before them, Maude was, I think, really pleased. He had not liked leaving Suvla without at least having one smack at the Turks, and now he thought his chance had come again. Personally I should have preferred to have had the smack without the scales being so heavily weighted in the enemy's favour, but everyone to his taste. I failed to see how the retention of Helles could really be defended. Presumably it was a sop to the die-hards, but it was a most dangerous gamble to indulge in. Wiser counsels eventually prevailed and it was abandoned, but only just in time. There were many delightful stories invented about the evacuations; one being that Enver had been paid a million to induce the Turkish forces not to interfere; another that the Turks were so pleased to see us depart that they sent down a fatigue party to push off the last "Beetle," which had grounded badly!

We got to Mudros about noon on the 20th, where I reported myself to G.H.Q. on board s.s. *Aragon* (no longer was this ship the abode of Lines of Communication) and saw Lynden-Bell, Chief of the Staff to Sir Charles Monro. He wanted me to start for Salonika that afternoon, but I jibbed at going off without at least a change of some sort and a modicum of blankets, all my kit having gone to Egypt with the 53rd Division. So, as the next available boat did not leave until Christmas Eve, I decided to wait till then.

I wrote a farewell order to the 53rd Division, in which I tendered a certain amount of advice to both officers and men. The former I reminded that the man who was eventually going to win the war was the man with a rifle and bayonet; therefore, unless they took great care of him, both in his training and his health, there would not be such a man and they would have entirely failed

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as officers. To the latter I said that discipline was the foundation of victory, and that when orders were given they must be implicitly obeyed, otherwise there could be no discipline and therefore no success. Rather a jobation, I fear, but when I saw some of the Division about seven months later, it was difficult to believe it to be the same unit, so much had they improved, and, later still, at the first capture of Gaza and the subsequent capture of Jerusalem the Division covered itself with glory. I received a typically delightful letter from General Byng thanking me for my work whilst under his command, which I appreciated enormously.

Carter and I rigged ourselves out for the new campaign as best we could from the ordnance stores and, on Christmas Eve, he, Fuller, and I started for Salonika. Fuller, brother to the G.S.O.I. of the 29th Division, had been on Byng's staff and had now been appointed G.S.O.I. of the 27th Division.

Salonika is a wonderful harbour. The town lying at the head of it is very picturesque in appearance as approached from the sea. The older part, the Turkish town, occupies the high ground, its mosques and minarets backed by the rising hills over which tower the heights of Hortiach some seven miles away. The more modern town extends along the harbour towards the east, and is rather of the villa type, though mingled with the modern villas are mediæval churches and covered bazaars. We proceeded to the Hôtel Splendide and secured rooms, after which I went to make my bow at Army Headquarters, where Sir Bryan Mahon ruled supreme. I there learnt that, though the three Infantry Brigades of the 27th had arrived, Divisional Headquarters were still *en route*, and that neither artillery nor transport had yet landed. I found out where the Infantry Brigades

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were in bivouac and arranged for a motor-car to take me round them the following day.

The hotel hardly deserved the name of "Splendide," for, though quite an imposing building, it was somewhat primitive according to Western standards. However, there were bathrooms and we dined almost luxuriously off spaghetti and goat (I think it must have been goat), washed down with Greek wine, which is not too bad if one does not mind a slight taste of resin. Next day we motored out to see the Infantry Brigades and found everyone hard at work, either making new roads or improving old ones. They were attached to other divisions for the present, and were being rationed by them.

We got back to our hotel late in the afternoon, and after tea Carter and I had a look round the town. So far as that was concerned, distance had certainly lent enchantment to the view—its inner aspect was quite a different thing. The streets were, in many parts, practically open sewers, the roadways were *pavé*, but in a bad state of disrepair, and occasionally one trod on a loose stone with the result that filthy mud was squirted up one's leg.

Returning to the hotel I went to find Fuller and discovered him surrounded by huge piles of letters which he was attempting to cope with by the light of one candle. A.H.Q. had promptly unburdened themselves of all correspondence addressed to, or connected with, the 27th Division, though how, without clerks and the usual paraphernalia of an office, I was supposed to be able to deal with the accumulated mass, I cannot think. So I told Fuller to send everything back and say that, although appointed to, I had not yet assumed command of the Division and could not do so until the Headquarters

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had arrived. It turned out that I did not assume command for some time because, on the third day, my old enemy—influenza—had me in his grip, and the medical authorities sent me off on a sea trip to Alexandria as being the best form of cure, and it was more than a fortnight before I returned to Salonika.

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CHAPTER X

ON THE MACEDONIAN FRONT

BY the time we reached Alexandria I was practically all right again. I went to the Hôtel Regina until I could communicate with my brother. At the hotel I met Phelps of my old Regiment, now in command of a service battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment, who, having been discharged from hospital, was on his way to rejoin his battalion in the 11th Division; also Mrs. Blackburne, the widow of an old brother-officer, who was devoting her energies to nursing the wounded. The following day I went to stay with my brother and sister-in-law at their house in Ramleh, where I remained for over a week. I did not, however, altogether waste my time because, owing to a shortage of suitable horses in the Remounts at Salonika, I had to try to get some in the Egyptian depots, both for members of my staff and for myself. They were not too easy to find, but eventually I secured ten fairly good ones which I took back on my return.

The ship on which I made the return journey was carrying the Derbyshire Yeomanry and, submarines in the Mediterranean having become both numerous and active, we pursued a roundabout and zigzag course. No lights of any kind were allowed after dusk; in fact, the captain took every precaution possible for the safety of his ship. We did not see any sign of a submarine during the voyage, but not long after we had reached Salonika I heard that this same ship had been torpedoed

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and sunk, so that even the most careful captain is not immune from these devilish craft.

The situation at Salonika had from the start been both curious and interesting. Greece was a neutral power, but her great statesman, M. Venizelos, and his following were strongly pro-Ally, whilst King Constantine was equally strongly pro-German. As I understood it, Venizelos had urged the Allies to occupy Salonika, had mobilized the Greek Army and was prepared to co-operate in going to the assistance of Serbia if attacked by Bulgaria. Before the Allies had completed their preparations for the new campaign, the Venizelists had been defeated in a general election and the Royalist party had come into power.

When the first Allied contingents landed at Salonika the atmosphere was somewhat electrical. The Greek Army was in occupation of the strategic points in Macedonia, and whether it would be friendly or hostile no one quite knew—I should fancy not even the Greek army itself. The Turkish, Austrian, and German consulates were still functioning and, as the Allied forces landed, the members of these consulates were to be seen sitting on camp-stools on the quay making notes of the numbers of men, horses, guns, etc., which were being disembarked. Nevertheless, General Sarrail, who had been appointed to the chief command, pushed forward through Doiran into Bulgarian territory in a gallant but belated effort to assist the hard-pressed Serbian Army, and by this move placed his force between the Bulgarian Army in front and the quite possibly hostile Greek Army in his rear.

The demonstration was much too late to have any effect. The gallant Serbians, attacked from the north by an Austro-German army and from the east by the Bulgars, had been forced to retreat through the mountain

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passes to the west until the remnant eventually reached the sea at Durazzo. The horrors of this retreat were almost incredible, and typhus, as well as starvation, took such heavy toll that only a remnant of the brave Serbian Army ever reached the coast. There at least help was at hand. The survivors were transported in British and Italian ships to the island of Corfu, and there the French took over the task of re-equipment and reorganization. After a very few months these wonderful survivors entered again, with the same gallantry, into the struggle for the redemption of their country, now over-run by Bulgars, Austrians, and Germans. Their aged king had shared the horrors and hardships of their retreat, as also had English ladies, working as nurses with Lady Paget's Hospital, though they had eventually moved south and so reached Monastir and finally safety in Salonika.

General Sarrail's somewhat meagre force, after penetrating into Bulgaria, had been forced to retreat, and during this retreat had encountered a severe blizzard, perhaps more fatal in its effects than the fire of the pursuing enemy on troops unsuitably clad for such a contingency. In fact, one heard that the retreat through the Doiran Defile became so disorganized that it was little short of a rout, though luckily the Bulgars did not press their advantage to the full.

General Sir Bryan Mahon was in command of the British Army in Salonika, but General Sarrail was Commander-in-Chief of all the Allied forces, which, as befitted Macedonia, were a very mixed bag. The French troops themselves contained many nationalities, including natives of Annam; the British forces included Indians; then came Russians, Italians, Albanians, and so on. It was even rumoured that a Portuguese contingent was on its way, though this never materialized.

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The British Army was organized in two Corps, the 10th, 22nd, and 26th Divisions forming one, and the 27th and 28th Divisions the other. These two Corps were commanded respectively by General (Fatty) Wilson and General George Milne (known throughout his Corps as "Uncle George"). I found the Headquarters of my Division at Hortiach whilst the Division itself extended from Avasil on Langaza Lake, to Stavros on the Gulf of Orphano, a distance of about thirty-five miles, of which distance some twenty-three miles consisted of lakes, namely, part of Langaza and the whole of Beshik Lake. It was bitterly cold at Hortiach; the snow lay some inches deep and a biting north wind, known locally as a Vardar wind, cut through even the warmest clothing.

Even during my short absence I found that changes had occurred amongst the staff. Fuller had already been promoted to be B.G.G.S. of General Wilson's Corps, and been replaced by Clarke, promoted from G.S.O.2 to be G.S.O.1. Vaughan, who had been with me for a short time on Gallipoli in command of a battalion of the 53rd Division, and whose services in that capacity I had much appreciated, had been appointed A.Q.M.G. Plunkett, until lately Military Attaché in Serbia, was G.S.O.2, whilst my personal staff consisted of the invaluable Carter as A.D.C. and Barclay of the Surrey Yeomanry as Camp Commandant.

There seemed to be no idea of, at present, making any forward or offensive movement against the Bulgars, so, pending a new development in the Greek political situation, General Sarrail was intent on creating an entrenched position, like the lines of Torres Vedras, for the protection of Salonika itself. The G.O.C.-in-C. had elected to place the French troops on the west, i.e. on the left of the position, which was served by two lines of railway, whilst

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the eastern portion, which possessed no railway, and only one road, the Serres Road (the other means of communication consisting merely of tracks fit for pack animals), was allotted to the British. This arrangement greatly simplified the French transport problem. Besides being able to make use of the existing lines, they lost no time in laying down light railways to serve those portions of their position which were any distance away from the main lines.

It was early apparent that the French had come to stay, whereas we, I think, all had the feeling that we had arrived too late to do any good and that we would be more valuable on the Western Front. Indeed, much later, when I suggested to General Milne the advisability of a light railway from Stavros to Neohori he was quite indignant at the idea of starting anything in the nature of what he called permanent works. Meanwhile as, in the area allotted to my Division, there were no roads, they had to be made. Walker, the able C.R.E., at once set to work with the Field Company R.E., assisted by local labour, to make our communications possible and in a marvellously short time well-graded roads were opened throughout the area.

The 27th Division Infantry consisted of the 80th Brigade under Brigadier-General Smith (two battalions 60th Rifles, one battalion Rifle Brigade, and the King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry); the 82nd Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Hare (the Royal Irish, Royal Irish Fusiliers, Leinster Regiment, and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry); the 81st Brigade commanded by Brigadier-General Croker (the Royal Scots, the Cameron Highlanders, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and the Gloucestershire Regiment). Brigadier-General White-Thompson was C.R.A. and Colonel Smith (known

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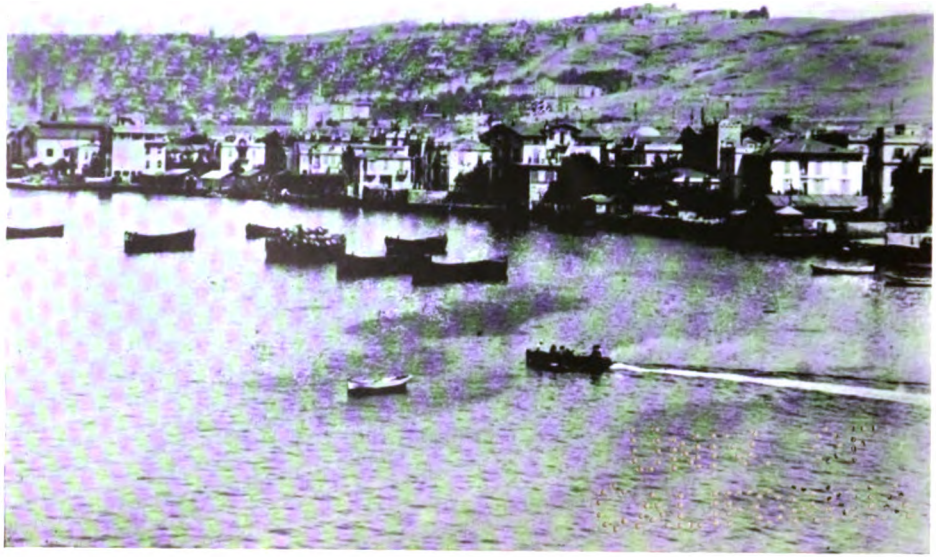

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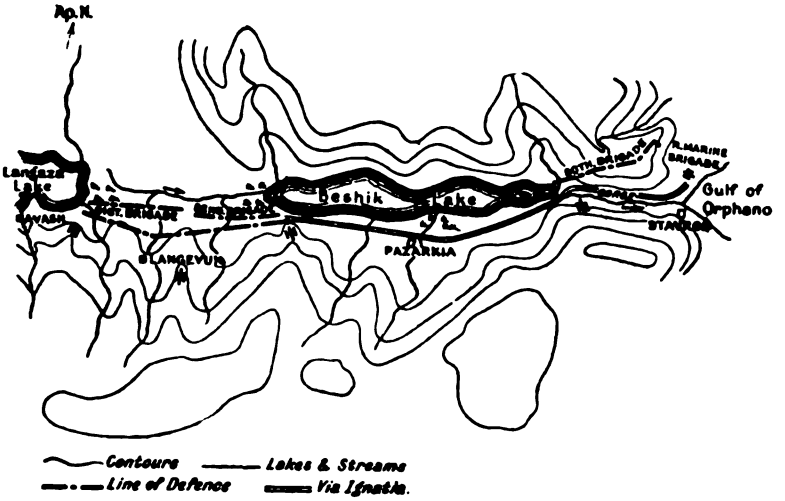

ROUGH SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE THE ORIGINAL DEFENSIVE LINE HELD BY THE 27TH DIVISION

as Fred P.) A.D.M.S. of the Division. The Chaplain, with Divisional Headquarters, was the Reverend Mr. Gibson, quite one of the best parsons it has ever been my privilege to meet. Altogether, it was an even better Division than I had been led to expect.

The 27th had served for some time in France but, except during the second battle of Ypres, had never suffered very heavy casualties. A large proportion of the original officers and non-commissioned officers were still alive and with their units, and the men were, generally speaking, of splendid physique and well trained. The task of commanding such a Division was an easy one; it practically ran itself.

I attach a rough sketch to show the line which we had to render impregnable to attack and the distribution of the Division. I have already said that there were no roads in the divisional area, but I must modify this statement because there was one road, at least the remains of

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one, namely the Via Ignatia, the highway between Rome and Byzantium (Constantinople) which existed in the days of the great Roman Empire, and along which many thousands of Roman legionaries must have marched to the conquest of their Near Eastern possessions. Parts of this ancient highway were still in good condition and along it were the ruins of old barracks and defensive posts, as well as fairly well preserved Roman baths, situated at the hot and other medicated springs on the southern shore of Beshik Lake.

Hortiach being an unsuitable and certainly not a central place for Divisional Headquarters, I set out on the day following my arrival to prospect for a more suitable camp and fixed on a site in the neighbourhood of Langevuk. It was not too bad, with good water close at hand, sandy soil, and lying in a valley sheltered from the north. We soon moved down there and this brought me into closer touch with at least two of my Brigades (81st and 82nd).

To the south of us, and quite near, ran a line of rugged hills, aptly called by the French a "massif." These hills receded somewhat to the south of Beshik Lake but closed in again to form a gorge at the eastern end of it. The Lake drained into the Gulf of Orphano by way of a delightful stream which tumbled its way for about five miles through a most picturesque gorge, shaded by old chenār (plane) trees, until it reached the sea near Stavros. Until the gorge was reached, the massif was pierced by numerous deep and broad ravines down which flowed, at that time, gentle and pellucid streams, though it was plainly to be seen that heavy rain would soon turn these gentle streams into raging torrents capable of sweeping all before them.

The distance between the two lakes was something

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over six miles, so that the task of thoroughly fortifying this length of line, making a covered and defensive road along the foot of the massif, joining this up with the support trenches by means of long communication trenches, joining the support trenches to the firing-lines and redoubts with shorter ones, in fact making a complete defensive line strong in depth as well as in length, was quite a formidable and lengthy affair. In addition to the requisite digging, we had to cut down trees, saw them into lengths, and split these to form suitable posts for barbed-wire entanglements. Luckily there was a wood at the south-east side of Langaza Lake which provided the timber, but the transport animals of the Division had already sufficient work to do owing to the distances over which they had to draw rations and forage, and the added burden of carting loads of stakes long distances across country soon told on their condition. Occasionally some of us went into Salonika and, though there was little to do there, it was in many respects an interesting place. Like Macedonia generally, it was a *mélange* of races not only amongst the Allied Army but amongst the inhabitants proper. The well-to-do merchants and shopkeepers were nearly all Spanish Jews, a colony of whom had been driven out of Spain during the worst times of the Inquisition and had settled at Salonika, and who still spoke pure Castilian. The older women dressed their hair in a particular way and wore a green silk kerchief as a covering instead of a hat. There were also Greek merchants and shopkeepers, Turk, Bulgar, and Serb porters and menials. There was a covered Turkish bazaar where I bought a few nice rugs which I still treasure. Amongst the Greek troops, the Cretans stood out as the smartest and of the finest physique; I fancy they, at all events, were heart and soul for Venizelos.

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The town seemed to be always crowded and it was quite a sight to see the confused traffic being controlled by the British Military Police (really enlisted London policemen). Every Allied nation had its own Military Police, but the only effective controlling force, as regards traffic, was the British policeman; the others merely looked on and wondered.

For the patrolling and defence of the Lakes we had motor boats armed with machine guns. These boats were controlled by the Royal Navy, which has a profound distrust of any land-lubber having anything to do with a boat even in fresh water, and were each in charge of a small midshipman, though the machine-gun crews were all soldiers. The little middies were having the time of their lives. Indeed, one small boy told me that with pay and allowances he was drawing the princely stipend of five shillings a day.

The Lakes were full of fish, and maintained a number of fishing villages, but were all of the coarse variety, such as pike and perch. There seemed to be a ready sale for these in the Salonika fish market, the inhabitants evidently preferring them to sea fish, so that the fishermen drove a thriving trade. The Lakes were also the resort of countless water-birds, including numbers of duck, geese, and even swans, which, I believe, often fell victims to the fire of the machine guns in the patrol boats.

When going to inspect the 80th Brigade I had to get a passage down Beshik Lake in one of the patrol boats and have a horse provided for me at the other end. On my first excursion d'Arcy-Clarke, of the Derbyshire Yeomanry, kindly placed one of his horses at my disposal, which I mounted and rode down the gorge. After having gone a few hundred yards the orderly, who had brought the horse, handed me a note from d'Arcy-Clarke in which

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I was warned that on first mounting the horse he would probably give a few bucks. Whether the orderly knew the contents of the note or not I don't know, but I rather fancied he had adopted the " Wait and See " motto and I was almost sorry for his disappointment at the lack of result.

The defensive line, in course of preparation by Smith and his brigade, presented many difficulties owing to the rugged hills on the north side of the gorge, over which it had to run, but the general line selected seemed to me to be the best possible one and all the battalions were putting their backs into the work of defence. The gorge and its enclosing hills were beautiful, the former with its delightful stream issuing from the Lake and its magnificent shady chenār trees, the hills clothed with tall Mediterranean heath in full flower, holly and other bushes, whilst on the higher levels Spanish chestnuts and other trees added to the charm. For the first three miles the gorge was narrow but gradually opened out as it neared Stavros, until the hills receded and revealed a wide, open, and partially cultivated plain reaching to the deep blue of the Gulf of Orphano. The road through this gorge was part of the Via Ignatia and there were many ruins of archæological interest on the encircling heights. Wild flowers of every sort and kind abounded, fish (a species of grayling) could be caught on a fly in the stream, woodcock were plentiful on the hills and duck on the lake.

I do not think I have mentioned that neither regimental officers nor men in the Salonika force had tents, nor were these provided either in the bitter cold of the winter or during the heat of the summer. The 80th Brigade, having the material at hand, had built brushwood huts for themselves. Their encampments presented a decidedly gipsy-like appearance but were certainly both

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practical and useful. Supplies for this Brigade came by sea to Stavros, so the transport animals were not being overworked and all looked fit and well fed. I found that there were complaints about the bread not being properly risen, so went to the bakery and asked what kind of substitute was being used for yeast; on being informed by the sergeant in charge that it was "Parisian Balm" I asked to be shown some, and when a bottle of Guinness's stout was produced the reason for, and the reasonableness of, the complaints became at once apparent. I left Stavros with some regret but promised myself another visit at an early date.

General Milne used often to pay us a visit to see how the defensive line was progressing and on one occasion said that my Brigadiers were too good and that if I could recommend any of them for command of divisions he would forward such recommendations. I was very glad of the opportunity and at once sent in the names of Hare and Croker. The next time I saw Milne he asked me why I had omitted Smith's name as he himself had formed a very high opinion of this officer when he (Milne) was commanding the 27th Division in France. I could only say that my knowledge of General Smith was comparatively slight and that, if he wished it, I would also forward his name, and this I at once did.

Leave was being granted freely to officers in the French force, so, as there seemed so little that I could do, or at least that could not be equally well done by someone else, and there being no immediate prospect of any fighting taking place, I thought a short period of leave home was almost indicated. I tentatively broached the subject to General Milne, who received my proposals with no enthusiasm whatever. Shortly afterwards, however, when Bryan Mahon was making one of his lightning seventy-

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mile rides round the British line, I asked him whether there was any objection to my having a fortnight's leave in England and was assured there was none. This was splendid! Carter also got leave to accompany me, and we went off in a French ship with a party of twenty-five French officers and one other British officer, Dudley Carleton of the Derbyshire Yeomanry.

It was a funny voyage; the first business of our ship was to escort an empty cargo boat as far as Biserta and, as the tramp in front only made about six knots, we steadily zigzagged in her wake. Our vessel was by way of being armed, that is to say we carried a gun in our bows, but I really doubt if anyone on board knew how to fire it. There may of course have been life-belts, but I certainly never saw any, nor to the best of my belief was anyone else informed of their existence; nobody was told off to any particular boat in case of having to abandon the ship; lights were left blazing all night, and after we had finished escorting the tramp, zigzagging was no longer indulged in.

My French was somewhat rusty and, though I was able to read it with ease, my conversation was decidedly lacking in facility of expression. At meal-times I sat between two Commandants. One was a quiet little man whom I could understand fairly well, but he did not talk much; indeed, when the others were particularly noisy he said nothing; though at the finish of a meal he never omitted to produce a packet of cigarettes and say: "*Voulez-vous un Maryland, mon Général?*" The other Commandant was, on the contrary, very voluble and noisy; he used to indulge in tremendous and vituperative arguments with a doctor, who sat about half the length of the saloon away from him and, when excited, spoke in a patois so that I found him most difficult to understand.

The most amusing man on board was a member of

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General Sarrail's staff who, I gathered, had been a journalist before the war broke out but was now a Captain in the Chasseurs Alpins and what we would call a Staff Captain —the French regimental officers had christened the staff "*Viande conservée.*" He was never tired of telling me how quickly he had climbed the military ladder. "*Au commencement de la guerre, simple soldat, puis caporal, puis sergent, puis sous-lieutenant, et maintenant Capitaine et Légion d'Honneur.*" Sarrail had been decorated with the G.C.M.G. and I was assured many times that now: "*Le Général Sarrail était très, très content.*"

However, they were all very good fellows, as were also the ship's officers, and my French came back by the end of the voyage sufficiently to enable me to make a speech in that language (at least I hope it was); the said speech being interlarded with "*La Belle France,*" "*La chère Patrie,*" "*L'armée glorieuse,*" etc., was received with loud and prolonged applause and "L'entente" was extremely "cordiale." A day or so before we got into Toulon it was announced that the menu for dinner would include snails, and this caused as great a manifestation of joy amongst the French officers as would the arrival of a haggis amongst a company of Scotsmen. I tasted one of *les escargots* and hope never to do so again.

For the purpose, I suppose, of impressing the inhabitants of that very peaceful spot, Toulon, Dudley Carleton dressed himself in real swashbuckler style with smasher hat and automatic pistol strapped on his thigh. The quiet little Commandant regarded him with mild surprise when he appeared on deck and then said: "*Ah, mais c'est sérieux donc.*" Anyhow, it was too serious for Carter and me, who both assured him that we could not possibly travel with a Wild West Show, so, somewhat unwillingly, he discarded his fancy kit.

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We stayed at the Hôtel Splendide, Marseilles, that night and got a train to Paris the following day, where we again stayed the night and most of the following day, in splendour, at the Ritz. The following afternoon we managed to get a train for Boulogne, where we arrived at an unearthly hour in the morning and had to wander about until some place where we could get a cup of tea would be open. Then over the town sailed two Boche aeroplanes and dropped a few bombs. This, with the resulting anti-aircraft activity, effectually aroused the sleeping town, so that we got our tea, or café-au-lait, probably the latter, earlier than expected. In Boulogne harbour lay the *Sussex*, which only the day before had been torpedoed in the Channel and had had her bows blown off, but in spite of this had managed to get into harbour. Anti-submarine activity was apparent when we crossed to Folkestone, the boat being closely escorted by a destroyer whilst a submarine-catching airship hovered overhead.

I found my wife very much improved in health and more like her old self. She had taken a flat in Albemarle Street and Jack, who had passed out of Sandhurst and been gazetted to the 16th Lancers, had come on leave from France to welcome me. It was good to be home again and, as there was really nothing doing at Salonika, I did not this time feel like a deserter. I quite forget what we did during my short leave, but I well remember dining with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur James, and going to see the *Bing Boys*. It was, alas! the last time I ever saw that charming personality, Arthur James, as he died, to the sorrow of all who knew him, the following year.

The fortnight fled rapidly and it seemed that only a few days had elapsed when Carter rejoined me in town

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for our return journey. However, something went wrong, I remember, and we had to spend the night at Folkestone ; presumably we either missed the boat or there was not one running that day. General Horne crossed over in the same boat and told me that in France all the troops were full of confidence, but, like most soldiers, he was gloomy about the devious ways of politicians.

On our journey back through France I noted all sorts of new symbols, new to me, that is to say; for instance, in our carriage was a stout man in khaki, the collar of which was decorated with *green* gorgets. I did not like to show my ignorance in matters military, but eventually curiosity overcame me and I asked him what these tabs denoted. He looked surprised at my stupidity and answered shortly: "Press." I do not think I noted whether he was a Brigadier-General or not, but most people on odd jobs were given this rank during the war; some indeed soared to higher ranks both in the Royal Navy and the Army.

I rather think that on this journey we did not have to stay the night in Paris, but went straight on to Marseilles, where we arranged for our onward voyage. We were given passages in a British ship, one of a number placed at the disposal of the French Government, starting from Toulon within twenty-four hours. So we went again to that port, where we spent the night and got badly bitten by mosquitoes. Our ship was carrying some of the Serbian troops who, reorganized and re-equipped, were being taken to Salonika to join that polyglot army. Later they showed that misfortune had not quelled their courage, and in the capture of Monastir the Serbs fought with unsurpassed gallantry. I take off my hat to the bravery of the Serbs, and am proud to be the possessor of one of their distinguished

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Orders, "The White Eagle of Serbia." On this ship many more precautions against submarine attack were taken than had been the case during our homeward voyage, but anyhow we never saw a sign of a U-boat.

We did not enter the docks on our arrival at Salonika, because, owing to the heavy dock-dues exacted by the Greek authorities, General Sarrail had had a landing jetty built, more to the east, and at the head of the Bay, at which all the French and Serbian troops, as well as supplies, were being landed. The Greeks were still by way of being neutral, but I fancy only remained so owing to the fear of the British Navy, which could easily do Greece irreparable damage, and owing to the doubts of King Constantine about the absolute loyalty of the army to the crown. Sarrail was perpetually treading on their toes. First he arrested and then deported the members of the enemy consulates; then he surrounded and took possession of the forts commanding the harbour of Salonika, and so on and so on. He was evidently determined to show the Greek Government that it was not master in its own country—and it put up with these various insults without any apparent murmur.

There had been a change in the command of the British Army. Bryan Mahon and his Chief of the General Staff (Howell) had left and been succeeded by Milne (promoted to be a Lieutenant-General on his appointment to command) with Gillman as M.G.G.S., though Travers-Clarke still remained as Deputy Quartermaster-General. Briggs from command of the 26th Division had succeeded "Uncle George" in command of the Corps, whilst in the Division itself Clarke had been succeeded by Grogan as G.S.O.1.

We returned to Langevuk and I again took up the

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weary round of supervising trench construction, now nearing completion. The Royal Marine Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, under command of Trotman, had been landed at Stavros and materially assisted the 80th Brigade in garrisoning that somewhat weakly-held sector. Two naval 6-inch guns had also been landed there and duly emplaced, thus strengthening our right flank. Gradually I began to lose my Brigadiers. The first to go was Croker, who went to command the 28th Division; in his place Widdrington of the 60th Rifles took over the 81st Brigade. Then Hare went to Egypt, first to command an Australian Reserve Division and later the 54th (East Anglian) Division, and was succeeded by Brooke, a well-known mounted infantry soldier, in command of the 82nd Brigade. Finally Smith left us, also for Egypt, to command the 52nd Division and was replaced at the head of the 80th Brigade by Bobby Roberts of the 7th Royal Fusiliers.

I have already mentioned the profusion of wild flowers, but perhaps rather prematurely, as that only applied to the very early ones, whereas now, in April, more and more varieties were coming into bloom. The glades of Hortiach and other hills were carpeted with primroses and violets; irises and cyclamens were blooming, and the flat ground between Langaza and Beshik Lakes was a yellow sea of asphodels. Everything was very peaceful and not even an hostile aeroplane came along to rouse us from our dreams.

General Sarrail, having practically completed his defence cordon, was in the habit of having senior officers of the Greek army, and journalists taken round so that they might proclaim to the world at large how safe from any attack Salonika now was. Personally I thought it might have been better to give out that the

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defences were poor and the Army thoroughly demoralized, so that the enemy might thereby be induced to advance from his mountain fastnesses and attack us, as there seemed to be so little hope of a forward movement on our side. I say "little hope," but we did have some, and I was quite thrilled one day when General Milne, who had been looking at our part of the defensive line, called me on one side, well out of hearing distance from the others, and then asked me in a low voice whether I was satisfied with the defences. The thrill went pop! I had made certain from his mysterious manner that an important move was on the *tapis* and that the mountain was about to bring forth something more than such a very small mouse.

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CHAPTER XI

THE STRUMA VALLEY: LEAVING FOR BASRA

AS time wore on and the defences became practically complete, we elaborated the barbed-wire system so that the enemy, if he attacked, might be guided into real death-traps; we also did a good deal of training in hill warfare, as well as in the open, and so kept the men fit.

Experience in Gallipoli led me to attach the very greatest importance to sanitary precautions; the deep-trench system, which had proved so successful in the Lala Baba area at Suvla, was adopted, rather against the opinion of Smith, the A.D.M.S., though he soon became an enthusiastic convert. Incinerators were established everywhere for the destruction of horse litter and all rubbish, whilst such piles of litter and rubbish as we found already in existence, being too wet and fermented to be disposed of by incineration, were thoroughly treated with chloride of lime and covered with soil to a depth of several inches. Smith possessed an eagle eye for possible breeding places of flies or mosquitoes and, thanks to his unremitting zeal in hunting them down, we practically had no flies at all and the Division remained as healthy as it would have done in barracks under normal peace-time conditions. When in command of a battalion, even in peace-time, I had always had a health chart of the various companies kept up and brought once a week for my inspection; if one or two showed a greater percentage of sick than

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the others I wanted to know the reason why from the company commanders concerned. I found this system useful because it brought home to the company commanders a sense of responsibility for the health of their command. The same system is applicable to the larger formations though not in such an individualistic degree.

It was a very dull time for the men and here our splendid Padre, Gibson, proved himself to be an invaluable asset in providing recreation for them. He organized and personally took part in games, concerts, sports and boxing competitions, and in this he was ably assisted by Barclay. These two also ran a Divisional Headquarters canteen, through a Greek contractor, where the men could buy extra food and small necessities. I am certain that nothing bores the British soldier so much as having money in his pocket and no means of spending it. Our assistant Provost-Marshal, Cockerill, an enthusiastic antiquarian, made quite a collection of coins, pottery, and marbles. Some of the coins of Philip of Macedon were really beautiful, the cameo being so clearly defined and deeply cut.

Part of our training during the period under review consisted of teaching the men to load packs properly; it being quite certain that if, and when, we did advance, wheeled transport would be out of the question and pack-animals our only means of supply. The medical officers busied themselves in inventing and experimenting with various means of carrying the wounded down hill-paths by mule transport. I remember going one day to see the contrivances invented by the officer commanding a Field Hospital, which was picturesquely encamped on a comparatively large and grassy island situated in one of the gorges of the massif. After personally testing the carriers, and going round the

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patients, I asked the O.C. whether he had anything else interesting to show me. He said he had, and took me to the head of the island; there, about twenty feet from the ground, and lying suspended across the branches of two other trees, was a big tree-trunk. He said, "Now, how do you think that got there?" I replied that I thought the answer was very simple and that if his hospital remained in its present position until the rain came, his tents would probably be suspended quite as high. People who have not lived in the East little realize the effects of torrential rain and how quickly streams can become raging torrents owing to a sudden and heavy fall.

Towards the end of May a new situation arose. The Greek troops surrendered to the Bulgars the strategic points they had hitherto been holding; amongst others the forts in the Roupel Pass and at Kavalla, and not only did they surrender the forts but the garrisons themselves also surrendered, though on what conditions I do not know. At Kavalla, when the surrender was about to take place, our Navy was able to get away a number of refugees, though the Greek troops raised considerable objections to people leaving. The story I heard was, that there was great confusion on shore, the people who wished to leave being prevented from doing so by the Greek soldiers, so a Royal Naval Reserve officer, formerly a second mate in the merchant service, landed with half a dozen blue-jackets, quickly dominated the whole situation, and brought away the refugees in boats, in spite of the Greek garrison.

The surrender of Roupel and Kavalla left the whole of the Struma Valley open to the Bulgar forces, so one of my brigades was ordered forward to hold the bridge over the Struma River at Neohorí. For this task, I selected the

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80th Brigade under Roberts and, the Brigade of Royal Marines having been taken away, I moved the 81st and 82nd Brigades, with all the Divisional Artillery, as well as my Headquarters, down to Stavros, leaving small maintenance parties for the upkeep of the Langevuk defence line. We were all glad of the change; the weather was now becoming very hot, and at Stavros we got the welcome shade of the chenār trees, the sea to bathe in, and "fresh fields and pastures new" are anyhow nearly always welcome.

The first necessity was the provision of a better road from Stavros to Neohori, and this was not too easy owing to the gravel and sand washed down from the hills by the numerous watercourses. In particularly bad places, deviations marked "for motors only" were made, but the only effect of such notices was that the wagons nearly always took the motor deviations, the drivers scenting something really good in the way of a road, and the deviations soon got so badly cut up that they became almost impassable. I had been provided with a Sunbeam car, but quickly found that only the humble Ford would get me where I wanted to be. Few, if any, English cars then had the necessary clearance to enable them to get about a rough country. The scheme for a bridgehead defence of Neohori was soon decided on, and Roberts and his men set to work with such a will that in a very short time the position (which lent itself admirably to the purpose) became practically impregnable.

There had been several changes in the command of the squadron of Surrey Yeomanry, which formed the Divisional Cavalry, and none had been a success, so, somewhat reluctantly, I felt it incumbent on me to send Barclay back to take charge. In his place I was fortunate enough to get Neilson, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders,

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who remained a member of my personal staff until the end of the War, and who, like Carter, was a real treasure throughout. General Briggs was very keen about the Yeomanry carrying out reconnaissance patrols on the farther (east) bank of the Struma; I was not so keen myself, as, owing to the high crops, mounted men could see little, and could be ambushed with great ease. Still, orders are orders, so, until the Bulgars came along in force, these patrols used to sally forth daily. Being shot at by invisible foes, the patrols used to retire rapidly towards their only line of safety, the Neohori Bridge. This happened so frequently, and the horses became so well trained in the manœuvre, that on a shot being fired they at once wheeled round and made for the bridge of their own accord. Luckily, the Bulgar was a most indifferent shot, so that the casualties resulting from this patrol work were negligible, but—so was the information.

Mosquitoes began to be troublesome, but in the Stavros area Smith hunted out and treated all possible breeding places. Amongst other hidden nurseries he discovered that the hollow trunks of the old chenār trees contained water and myriads of larvæ. Augers were brought into use, the water was drained out, and the nurseries destroyed. Neohori, in the Struma Valley, was not so easily dealt with, but the troops, though told off to the various sections of the defensive line which they were to occupy in the case of alarm, were withdrawn from the valley at least an hour before sunset, and slept on the high ground; the exception to this being the bridge guard, for which a mosquito hut was provided. We had brought motor patrol boats round for use on the shallow Struma Lake, the camp for the crews when on land consisting also of mosquito-proof huts. The Royal Navy had by this time handed the boats over to the ignorant soldiers, and had

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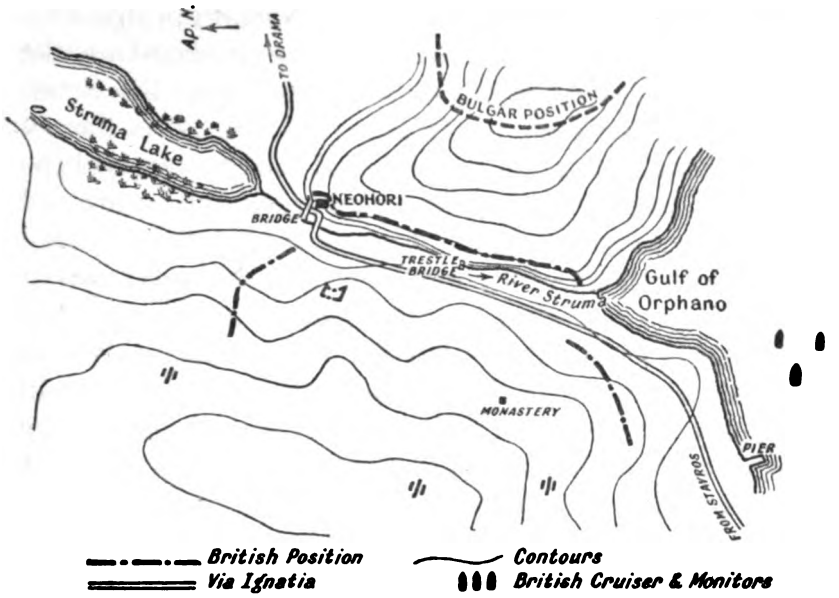

SKETCH MAP OF NEOHORI BRIDGEHEAD

also taken away their six-inch guns and crews from Stavros. But we were now strengthened on our right flank by a cruiser (H.M.S. *Grafton*) and two monitors, the whole under command of Captain Grace, R.N. (a son of the famous W.G.). Admiral Thursby came round once to pay us a visit, and as he was very keen on having a ride, I took him by mountain paths over the hills on the southern side of the gorge, through groves of fine chestnut trees. The paths or tracks were both rocky and in parts precipitous; however, the horses kept their feet and I think he enjoyed his ride. The view from the top was magnificent, so made up for the difficulties of ascent and descent.

By the end of June the Bulgars had advanced in force through the Roupel Pass and occupied Demirhissar, Serres, and other towns on the east of the Struma, whilst another force, advancing from Kavalla, had occupied the

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high ground immediately east of the Neohori bridgehead. A brigade of Divisional Artillery was emplaced on the high ground to the west, and Roberts made his Headquarters in a Greek monastery near by. Our line of defence now centred in the valley of the Struma, and the villagers close to the river-line were ordered to vacate and move farther to the west. I was rather inclined to pity the people, though they made no objections and moved with the greatest alacrity, until I heard afterwards that they always moved up into the hills during July and August, which are particularly bad months for malaria in that part of the world. Why General Sarrail should have elected to place his troops in this fever-stricken valley at this particular season I cannot imagine.

General Briggs sent orders for the 27th Division, less the 80th Brigade, to move back to Hortiach to replace the 10th Division, which had moved elsewhere. Very reluctantly we left our picturesque surroundings and healthy bivouacs, only to find our new camp absolutely swarming with flies; Smith had his work cut out to try to eliminate these pests—a much more difficult task when they are once established. However, he was fairly successful, though it was certainly an Augean stable that he had to cope with.

There was some idea of my Division being moved over to the western flank, namely, to the west of a line running south from the Doiran defile, where we would be next to the French and opposite to the 11th German Division. I went over to have a look at the country, and saw Duncan, late G.S.O.2 of the 11th Division but now commanding a brigade, who hospitably entertained us. Matters appeared to be somewhat more lively on the Doiran front than they had been with us, though we certainly had had some slight bickering on one occasion

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when, by Briggs's orders, a demonstration had been made by Roberts's Brigade against the opposing Bulgar forces. This demonstration had to be made in conjunction with others on the Struma line, and was timed to start at 2 p.m. But as at that hour the infantry, leaving their trenches to advance up the glacis-like slope towards the Bulgar position, would have been fully exposed to hostile fire for some hours, and therefore would have probably incurred heavy casualties, I decided that, at the hour named in the order, the demonstration should be confined to the guns, both naval and military, and that the infantry should not leave their trenches until 4.30 p.m. when the sun would be shining full in the faces of the enemy and the retirement could take place after dusk. For the purposes of a demonstration this reading of the order answered equally well, and saved many lives. The previous bombardment by the enormous guns of the monitors and cruiser, and the accurate fire of the 18-pounders and howitzers, must have given the Bulgars a good shaking up, because their rifle-fire directed against the infantry was high, wild, and almost innocuous.

To return to the Doiran front. After spending the night with Duncan, Carter and I went on farther to see the French Divisional General, and I was taken by his staff to a hill which completely overlooked and dominated the trenches occupied by the German division, so that it certainly appeared to me at the time that if we had to take them it would not be a very difficult proposition to tackle. However, the idea fell through, and very shortly my Division became more split up than ever. First the 81st Brigade was taken away and sent up the Serres Road to be attached to the 28th Division. Then, General Sarrail, having sent a French Cavalry Division across the Struma to attack the Bulgars—this attack was not a

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success—and an Infantry Division to occupy a part of the valley north of the Struma Lake, asked for more British troops to be dispatched to that area.

The only available unit was the 82nd Brigade, so Brooke took his Brigade down to occupy some miles of the valley to the north of the lake. In this area, and in fact in the whole of the valley, the mosquitoes were so bad that an hour before sunset one could literally hardly hear oneself speak. Briggs, under whose direct command the 60-mile line of the Struma now came, elected to concentrate such mounted troops as were available on the hills, and scatter his infantry along the malarious swamps in the valley. I presume that the direct occupation of the valley was ordered by Sarrail, but why? The range of high hills ("massif"), which lay some three to four miles back from the river-line on the right (west) bank, was pierced by only two roads and a limited number of footpaths. Full and clear observation of the whole valley could be obtained from any point on the massif by day, and the valley itself could have been patrolled by cyclists and mounted troops by night, so that a surprise crossing of the Struma by the Bulgarian Army was out of the question. The actual fact of extending the infantry over such a length of front at once created a weakness, because no really big concentration then remained which could be quickly brought to any threatened point, and worst of all was the effect on the health of the troops.

The main line of supply was by the Serres Road, and, though this was permanent and metalled, no road, unless it be *pavé* or concrete, can stand heavy and continuous motor traffic for long. From Salonika to the forward distributing base was about fifty miles, and in spite of armies of stone-breakers and road repairers, as well as numerous steam-rollers, it was impossible to keep

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the road in anything like good repair. The troops went down with malaria in scores, and the disease being of a particularly malignant type, their temperatures went up very high; this, combined with the jolting they received in the motor ambulances on their way to Salonika, often proved fatal to those whose hearts were not really strong. In any case, the virulent type of malaria contracted in the swamps of the Struma Valley was not easily shaken off. Salonika became more and more crowded with hospitals, and during the bad months of July and August there must have been thousands of sick.

The submarines or enemy U-boats were very active amongst the islands of the Ægean and in the neighbourhood of Salonika. Indeed, it was rather wonderful that their bag was kept down to such modest proportions as it was.

When we were at Stavros a submarine came into the Gulf of Orphano and sank a store-ship within 200 yards of the shore, near the mouth of the Struma. The intention of the U-boat was evidently to torpedo H.M.S. *Grafton*, but the store-ship steamed in on the weather-side of her just in time to get the torpedo full amidships, and sank at once, in only about five fathoms. H.M.S. *Grafton* and the two monitors which were lying close in sheered off as quickly as possible, but, after her daring exploit, the U-boat was seen no more and got safely away.

We received an addition to the strength of the 27th Division in July in the shape of a Middlesex Pioneer Battalion which, being principally composed of London navvies, was a great asset in road-making, and other work which entailed the shifting of earth. One hears talk of unskilled labour, but I do not really think there is such a thing. Men trained in any one class of work must always be better than the untrained, and it was quite a

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treat to see this Pioneer Battalion carrying out a task; the men never seemed to be in a hurry, but the work progressed rapidly and efficiently. A number of Macedonians were employed by the British Army in various capacities, mostly on road work, but some were enrolled as mule-drivers and put into khaki uniform. There was a story that General Briggs saw one of these drivers on the road one day, and mistaking him for a British soldier, addressed him in no very complimentary terms on his lack of cleanliness and generally unsoldierlike appearance. The man listened gravely, without understanding a word, and, when Briggs had finished, broke into a smile and said, "Bono Johnny."

Cockerill, our capable A.P.M., was entrusted with the task of raising a corps of Macedonian scouts, mostly ex-brigands (*comitadjis*), but I believe it was not a great success; they were willing to draw the pay but not to risk their lives.

I have said little about the Macedonian villages, but though there is a general family likeness, the inhabitants of them vary in race, and four neighbouring villages may quite easily be inhabited respectively by Greeks, Turks, Bulgars, or Serbs. During the spring and summer the storks take up their abode, and build their huge nests on the tops of the chimneys in most villages, and on seeing this I realized how the old story which one was told as a child, of the stork bringing the baby, arose. The British soldier, throughout my period of service in Macedonia, was extraordinarily well-behaved, and not a single instance of offences against women ever came to my notice; of course, it may have been a case of "Barkis is willin'," but that is another matter.

Sir Ian Hamilton had been good enough to put forward my name for a C.B. and would not take "no" for an

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answer, so whilst I was still at Salonika this honour was conferred on me. Until that time I had been in the unique position of being the only Major-General in the British Army with no initials after his name.

Early in September a cable from the War Office to A.H.Q. informed me that I had been appointed to command a Corps in the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant-General, and I was ordered to proceed forthwith to take up the appointment. By this time I was getting used to a rapid promotion quite beyond my deserts, and although, by all accounts, Mesopotamia was not a very promising proposition, and I was extremely sorry to give up command of a magnificent Division, I did think that Salonika was a "dud" show (in this I was wrong, as it eventually turned out), and that a new theatre of war would at least be a change, perhaps for the worse, but still a change.

Salonika had been interesting in many ways, and, although the fighting had been negligible, one had learnt a number of military lessons. First and foremost, the extreme value of efficient sanitary precautions. Second: that roads cannot replace railways for supply purposes; one cannot continue to supply a large force many miles beyond railhead or riverhead. Third: the fatal results of occupying malarious valleys, especially in the months of July and August. Fourth: the possibly fatal results of ordering attacks to take place without any personal knowledge of the ground. Fifth (I have made no mention of any instance of this): that it is a bad thing to exercise artillery horses in pulling empty wagons or with too light loads.

Parts of Macedonia, such as the Struma Valley, are marvellously fertile, but the country, owing to its unsettled state, has never been properly developed. When

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property has become safe, and law, order, and justice established, I think that the country must attain agricultural prosperity. I imagine also that it has other potentialities. For instance, when we cut through the spurs of the massif, in order to make the covered road previously referred to, the shaly rocks were distinctly oily to the touch. This fact, combined with the existence of hot and strongly sulphurous springs, seems to indicate the presence of oil deposits. I know that asbestos exists because I found some amongst rocks which were being broken up for road-metal, and it was of a good length.

Ravenshaw was appointed to the command of the 27th Division in my place—he was captured very shortly afterwards by an Austrian submarine, when on his way home, and remained a prisoner for the rest of the War—so I handed over to him, wrote a farewell order to the Division, to express my thanks to all ranks for their good work and military efficiency during my tenure of command, my regrets at leaving them and my best wishes for their future. Both Carter and Neilson elected to accompany me to Mesopotamia, so, after bidding farewell to General Milne and Gillman, we went off to embark for Alexandria. The voyage to that port was devoid of incident, and again the U-boats were conspicuous by their non-appearance. I ran down to see my brother at Ramleh, and then we went on to Cairo, and so to Ismailia, where we stayed the night with General Murray. He (Murray) gave me the impression of being fagged out, and I gathered, from his personal staff, that he was not at all fit and that he was doing too much work.

Whilst at Ismailia I was delighted to see Butler's Brigade of the 53rd Division, and the immense improvement visible, amongst both officers and men, since the Gallipoli days. They had now found their feet and the

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Brigade was fit for anything. I did not see Tom Mott's Brigade, but he himself came down to see me in Cairo, which was very nice and I was delighted to see him again. He gave me some account of the doings of the Division since landing in Egypt, which was all very interesting. He (Mott) was a first-rate soldier, and though he had elected, some time before the War, to retire from the Army to take up farming, he was eventually appointed to the command of the 53rd, and in this capacity was largely instrumental in the capture of Jerusalem later in the War.

We had been allotted passages to Bombay on a P. and O. liner and joined our ship at Port Said, finding amongst our fellow passengers General Sir Charles Monro, who was on his way out to take up the Commander-in-Chief-ship in India. There were a number of ladies on board who had risked the submarine peril to join their husbands in India or accompany them there. One brave woman had already made a previous attempt to get to India, but this had been frustrated by an enemy submarine which torpedoed the ship, though the passengers escaped in open boats. However, Port Said once reached, there was no further anxiety for the Captain, and the voyage to Bombay was quite pleasant, even though a trifle hot. Sir Charles was still a cripple on account of his ankle, being indeed threatened with phlebitis, so he had to sit in his own suite and keep his leg up all the time; in spite of this he remained his usual cheery self, full of jokes and stories. I was allotted a seat at that august board "the Captain's table," where my charming neighbour bore my long-winded dissertations with exemplary patience, though she was probably greatly relieved when the voyage ended.

At Aden, Skeen and Richardson, representing respectively the general and administrative sides of the Head-quarters Staff in India, joined the ship and kept Sir

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Charles busy in absorbing details of the problems which confronted him. However, after reaching Bombay, Sir Charles, instead of proceeding to Simla, elected to be transferred to a cruiser, placed at his disposal by the Admiral, and sailed almost immediately to Basra to consult with Maude and see for himself what the situation was in Mesopotamia. The advent of a new Commander-in-Chief, even though he did not land, created much stir amongst the staff in Bombay, and my humble desire for information about my own onward journey received scant attention.

I got a room at the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, whilst Carter and Neilson secured rooms near by, and on the following day I found information more readily obtainable now that the excitement had somewhat simmered down. It appeared that we should perforce have to stay more than a week in Bombay before passages to Basra would be available. We were advised to take servants with us, and informed that nothing whatever was obtainable in Mesopotamia, so that all stores must be bought in Bombay. No one seemed to have a good word to say for the country; in fact, when one admitted being on one's way to Mesopotamia, the general remark was, "Oh! Well, I am very sorry for you; it is an awful country." One very useful piece of advice we did get, and that was to take shot-guns and cartridges with us; these we managed to procure in Bombay, and a most valuable asset they proved to be.

An old friend, Colonel (Toby) Hunt, was in charge of the Remount Depot at Ahmednagar, and through him I got three useful horses; one being quite the most wonderful hack I have ever ridden. He was as comfortable as an armchair in all his paces and could walk seven and canter four miles an hour. Carter and Neilson, incited thereto

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by the numerous prophets of scarcity in Mesopotamia, bought up such anamount of stores in Bombay that I became quite nervous as to the hold capacity of the ship destined to carry us and them. Indian servants, including a cook, we obtained, at extortionate wages, through a Lucknow Agency, and a real bad lot they turned out to be, with the possible exception of the cook.

The Poona racing season was in full swing, so we went up to a meeting there on the Saturday special, returning to Bombay the same night. Before the War I had been a Steward and a Member of the Committee of the Western Indian Turf Club, so I was welcomed back to the fold by Reynolds, who, most of the executive officials having again donned khaki, was combining in his own capable hands the offices of Secretary, Handicapper, and Clerk of the Course. The space in the centre of the Race-course was now a large Camp, and to my horror I saw that the new polo ground, over which much money had been expended, was now the site of rows of tents, and cut up by trenches and foot-paths. It was a Hunnish proceeding for which there was no excuse, as there was no lack of suitable camping grounds in the neighbourhood of Poona still available.

I was more than delighted to see again their Excellencies Lord and Lady Willingdon, who were, as always, kindness personified, and wanted us to stay at Government House, though this we were obliged to decline. I had, however, a long talk with both of them, and learnt a great deal about the scandal of the sick and wounded from Mesopotamia after the Ctesiphon fight. They at least had not looked on with folded hands. Thanks to their exertions, hospital accommodation in Bombay was now on a lavish scale, where every comfort and recreation for the sick and wounded were provided. Lady Willing-

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weary round of supervising trench construction, now nearing completion. The Royal Marine Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, under command of Trotman, had been landed at Stavros and materially assisted the 80th Brigade in garrisoning that somewhat weakly-held sector. Two naval 6-inch guns had also been landed there and duly emplaced, thus strengthening our right flank. Gradually I began to lose my Brigadiers. The first to go was Croker, who went to command the 28th Division; in his place Widdrington of the 60th Rifles took over the 81st Brigade. Then Hare went to Egypt, first to command an Australian Reserve Division and later the 54th (East Anglian) Division, and was succeeded by Brooke, a well-known mounted infantry soldier, in command of the 82nd Brigade. Finally Smith left us, also for Egypt, to command the 52nd Division and was replaced at the head of the 80th Brigade by Bobby Roberts of the 7th Royal Fusiliers.

I have already mentioned the profusion of wild flowers, but perhaps rather prematurely, as that only applied to the very early ones, whereas now, in April, more and more varieties were coming into bloom. The glades of Hortiach and other hills were carpeted with primroses and violets; irises and cyclamens were blooming, and the flat ground between Langaza and Beshik Lakes was a yellow sea of asphodels. Everything was very peaceful and not even an hostile aeroplane came along to rouse us from our dreams.

General Sarrail, having practically completed his defence cordon, was in the habit of having senior officers of the Greek army, and journalists taken round so that they might proclaim to the world at large how safe from any attack Salonika now was. Personally I thought it might have been better to give out that the

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defences were poor and the Army thoroughly demoralized, so that the enemy might thereby be induced to advance from his mountain fastnesses and attack us, as there seemed to be so little hope of a forward movement on our side. I say "little hope," but we did have some, and I was quite thrilled one day when General Milne, who had been looking at our part of the defensive line, called me on one side, well out of hearing distance from the others, and then asked me in a low voice whether I was satisfied with the defences. The thrill went pop! I had made certain from his mysterious manner that an important move was on the *tapis* and that the mountain was about to bring forth something more than such a very small mouse.

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CHAPTER XI

THE STRUMA VALLEY: LEAVING FOR BASRA

AS time wore on and the defences became practically complete, we elaborated the barbed-wire system so that the enemy, if he attacked, might be guided into real death-traps; we also did a good deal of training in hill warfare, as well as in the open, and so kept the men fit.

Experience in Gallipoli led me to attach the very greatest importance to sanitary precautions; the deep-trench system, which had proved so successful in the Lala Baba area at Suvla, was adopted, rather against the opinion of Smith, the A.D.M.S., though he soon became an enthusiastic convert. Incinerators were established everywhere for the destruction of horse litter and all rubbish, whilst such piles of litter and rubbish as we found already in existence, being too wet and fermented to be disposed of by incineration, were thoroughly treated with chloride of lime and covered with soil to a depth of several inches. Smith possessed an eagle eye for possible breeding places of flies or mosquitoes and, thanks to his unremitting zeal in hunting them down, we practically had no flies at all and the Division remained as healthy as it would have done in barracks under normal peace-time conditions. When in command of a battalion, even in peace-time, I had always had a health chart of the various companies kept up and brought once a week for my inspection; if one or two showed a greater percentage of sick than

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the others I wanted to know the reason why from the company commanders concerned. I found this system useful because it brought home to the company commanders a sense of responsibility for the health of their command. The same system is applicable to the larger formations though not in such an individualistic degree.

It was a very dull time for the men and here our splendid Padre, Gibson, proved himself to be an invaluable asset in providing recreation for them. He organized and personally took part in games, concerts, sports and boxing competitions, and in this he was ably assisted by Barclay. These two also ran a Divisional Headquarters canteen, through a Greek contractor, where the men could buy extra food and small necessities. I am certain that nothing bores the British soldier so much as having money in his pocket and no means of spending it. Our assistant Provost-Marshal, Cockerill, an enthusiastic antiquarian, made quite a collection of coins, pottery, and marbles. Some of the coins of Philip of Macedon were really beautiful, the cameo being so clearly defined and deeply cut.

Part of our training during the period under review consisted of teaching the men to load packs properly; it being quite certain that if, and when, we did advance, wheeled transport would be out of the question and pack-animals our only means of supply. The medical officers busied themselves in inventing and experimenting with various means of carrying the wounded down hill-paths by mule transport. I remember going one day to see the contrivances invented by the officer commanding a Field Hospital, which was picturesquely encamped on a comparatively large and grassy island situated in one of the gorges of the massif. After personally testing the carriers, and going round the

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patients, I asked the O.C. whether he had anything else interesting to show me. He said he had, and took me to the head of the island; there, about twenty feet from the ground, and lying suspended across the branches of two other trees, was a big tree-trunk. He said, "Now, how do you think that got there?" I replied that I thought the answer was very simple and that if his hospital remained in its present position until the rain came, his tents would probably be suspended quite as high. People who have not lived in the East little realize the effects of torrential rain and how quickly streams can become raging torrents owing to a sudden and heavy fall.

Towards the end of May a new situation arose. The Greek troops surrendered to the Bulgars the strategic points they had hitherto been holding; amongst others the forts in the Roupel Pass and at Kavalla, and not only did they surrender the forts but the garrisons themselves also surrendered, though on what conditions I do not know. At Kavalla, when the surrender was about to take place, our Navy was able to get away a number of refugees, though the Greek troops raised considerable objections to people leaving. The story I heard was, that there was great confusion on shore, the people who wished to leave being prevented from doing so by the Greek soldiers, so a Royal Naval Reserve officer, formerly a second mate in the merchant service, landed with half a dozen blue-jackets, quickly dominated the whole situation, and brought away the refugees in boats, in spite of the Greek garrison.

The surrender of Roupel and Kavalla left the whole of the Struma Valley open to the Bulgar forces, so one of my brigades was ordered forward to hold the bridge over the Struma River at Neohori. For this task, I selected the

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80th Brigade under Roberts and, the Brigade of Royal Marines having been taken away, I moved the 81st and 82nd Brigades, with all the Divisional Artillery, as well as my Headquarters, down to Stavros, leaving small maintenance parties for the upkeep of the Langevuk defence line. We were all glad of the change; the weather was now becoming very hot, and at Stavros we got the welcome shade of the chenār trees, the sea to bathe in, and "fresh fields and pastures new" are anyhow nearly always welcome.

The first necessity was the provision of a better road from Stavros to Neohori, and this was not too easy owing to the gravel and sand washed down from the hills by the numerous watercourses. In particularly bad places, deviations marked "for motors only" were made, but the only effect of such notices was that the wagons nearly always took the motor deviations, the drivers scenting something really good in the way of a road, and the deviations soon got so badly cut up that they became almost impassable. I had been provided with a Sunbeam car, but quickly found that only the humble Ford would get me where I wanted to be. Few, if any, English cars then had the necessary clearance to enable them to get about a rough country. The scheme for a bridgehead defence of Neohori was soon decided on, and Roberts and his men set to work with such a will that in a very short time the position (which lent itself admirably to the purpose) became practically impregnable.

There had been several changes in the command of the squadron of Surrey Yeomanry, which formed the Divisional Cavalry, and none had been a success, so, somewhat reluctantly, I felt it incumbent on me to send Barclay back to take charge. In his place I was fortunate enough to get Neilson, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders,

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who remained a member of my personal staff until the end of the War, and who, like Carter, was a real treasure throughout. General Briggs was very keen about the Yeomanry carrying out reconnaissance patrols on the farther (east) bank of the Struma; I was not so keen myself, as, owing to the high crops, mounted men could see little, and could be ambushed with great ease. Still, orders are orders, so, until the Bulgars came along in force, these patrols used to sally forth daily. Being shot at by invisible foes, the patrols used to retire rapidly towards their only line of safety, the Neohori Bridge. This happened so frequently, and the horses became so well trained in the manœuvre, that on a shot being fired they at once wheeled round and made for the bridge of their own accord. Luckily, the Bulgar was a most indifferent shot, so that the casualties resulting from this patrol work were negligible, but—so was the information.

Mosquitoes began to be troublesome, but in the Stavros area Smith hunted out and treated all possible breeding places. Amongst other hidden nurseries he discovered that the hollow trunks of the old chenār trees contained water and myriads of larvæ. Augers were brought into use, the water was drained out, and the nurseries destroyed. Neohori, in the Struma Valley, was not so easily dealt with, but the troops, though told off to the various sections of the defensive line which they were to occupy in the case of alarm, were withdrawn from the valley at least an hour before sunset, and slept on the high ground; the exception to this being the bridge guard, for which a mosquito hut was provided. We had brought motor patrol boats round for use on the shallow Struma Lake, the camp for the crews when on land consisting also of mosquito-proof huts. The Royal Navy had by this time handed the boats over to the ignorant soldiers, and had

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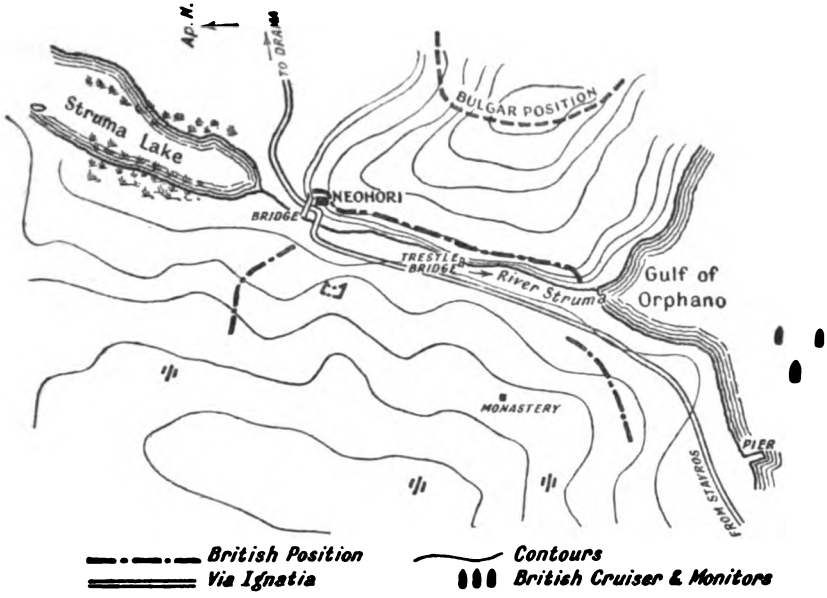

SKETCH MAP OF NEOHORI BRIDGEHEAD

also taken away their six-inch guns and crews from Stavros. But we were now strengthened on our right flank by a cruiser (H.M.S. *Grafton*) and two monitors, the whole under command of Captain Grace, R.N. (a son of the famous W.G.). Admiral Thursby came round once to pay us a visit, and as he was very keen on having a ride, I took him by mountain paths over the hills on the southern side of the gorge, through groves of fine chestnut trees. The paths or tracks were both rocky and in parts precipitous; however, the horses kept their feet and I think he enjoyed his ride. The view from the top was magnificent, so made up for the difficulties of ascent and descent.

By the end of June the Bulgars had advanced in force through the Roupel Pass and occupied Demirhissar, Serres, and other towns on the east of the Struma, whilst another force, advancing from Kavalla, had occupied the

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high ground immediately east of the Neohori bridgehead. A brigade of Divisional Artillery was emplaced on the high ground to the west, and Roberts made his Headquarters in a Greek monastery near by. Our line of defence now centred in the valley of the Struma, and the villagers close to the river-line were ordered to vacate and move farther to the west. I was rather inclined to pity the people, though they made no objections and moved with the greatest alacrity, until I heard afterwards that they always moved up into the hills during July and August, which are particularly bad months for malaria in that part of the world. Why General Sarrail should have elected to place his troops in this fever-stricken valley at this particular season I cannot imagine.

General Briggs sent orders for the 27th Division, less the 80th Brigade, to move back to Hortiach to replace the 10th Division, which had moved elsewhere. Very reluctantly we left our picturesque surroundings and healthy bivouacs, only to find our new camp absolutely swarming with flies; Smith had his work cut out to try to eliminate these pests—a much more difficult task when they are once established. However, he was fairly successful, though it was certainly an Augean stable that he had to cope with.

There was some idea of my Division being moved over to the western flank, namely, to the west of a line running south from the Doiran defile, where we would be next to the French and opposite to the 11th German Division. I went over to have a look at the country, and saw Duncan, late G.S.O.2 of the 11th Division but now commanding a brigade, who hospitably entertained us. Matters appeared to be somewhat more lively on the Doiran front than they had been with us, though we certainly had had some slight bickering on one occasion

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when, by Briggs's orders, a demonstration had been made by Roberts's Brigade against the opposing Bulgar forces. This demonstration had to be made in conjunction with others on the Struma line, and was timed to start at 2 p.m. But as at that hour the infantry, leaving their trenches to advance up the glacis-like slope towards the Bulgar position, would have been fully exposed to hostile fire for some hours, and therefore would have probably incurred heavy casualties, I decided that, at the hour named in the order, the demonstration should be confined to the guns, both naval and military, and that the infantry should not leave their trenches until 4.30 p.m. when the sun would be shining full in the faces of the enemy and the retirement could take place after dusk. For the purposes of a demonstration this reading of the order answered equally well, and saved many lives. The previous bombardment by the enormous guns of the monitors and cruiser, and the accurate fire of the 18-pounders and howitzers, must have given the Bulgars a good shaking up, because their rifle-fire directed against the infantry was high, wild, and almost innocuous.

To return to the Doiran front. After spending the night with Duncan, Carter and I went on farther to see the French Divisional General, and I was taken by his staff to a hill which completely overlooked and dominated the trenches occupied by the German division, so that it certainly appeared to me at the time that if we had to take them it would not be a very difficult proposition to tackle. However, the idea fell through, and very shortly my Division became more split up than ever. First the 81st Brigade was taken away and sent up the Serres Road to be attached to the 28th Division. Then, General Sarrail, having sent a French Cavalry Division across the Struma to attack the Bulgars—this attack was not a

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success—and an Infantry Division to occupy a part of the valley north of the Struma Lake, asked for more British troops to be dispatched to that area.

The only available unit was the 82nd Brigade, so Brooke took his Brigade down to occupy some miles of the valley to the north of the lake. In this area, and in fact in the whole of the valley, the mosquitoes were so bad that an hour before sunset one could literally hardly hear oneself speak. Briggs, under whose direct command the 60-mile line of the Struma now came, elected to concentrate such mounted troops as were available on the hills, and scatter his infantry along the malarious swamps in the valley. I presume that the direct occupation of the valley was ordered by Sarrail, but why? The range of high hills ("massif"), which lay some three to four miles back from the river-line on the right (west) bank, was pierced by only two roads and a limited number of footpaths. Full and clear observation of the whole valley could be obtained from any point on the massif by day, and the valley itself could have been patrolled by cyclists and mounted troops by night, so that a surprise crossing of the Struma by the Bulgarian Army was out of the question. The actual fact of extending the infantry over such a length of front at once created a weakness, because no really big concentration then remained which could be quickly brought to any threatened point, and worst of all was the effect on the health of the troops.

The main line of supply was by the Serres Road, and, though this was permanent and metalled, no road, unless it be *pavé* or concrete, can stand heavy and continuous motor traffic for long. From Salonika to the forward distributing base was about fifty miles, and in spite of armies of stone-breakers and road repairers, as well as numerous steam-rollers, it was impossible to keep

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the road in anything like good repair. The troops went down with malaria in scores, and the disease being of a particularly malignant type, their temperatures went up very high; this, combined with the jolting they received in the motor ambulances on their way to Salonika, often proved fatal to those whose hearts were not really strong. In any case, the virulent type of malaria contracted in the swamps of the Struma Valley was not easily shaken off. Salonika became more and more crowded with hospitals, and during the bad months of July and August there must have been thousands of sick.

The submarines or enemy U-boats were very active amongst the islands of the Ægean and in the neighbourhood of Salonika. Indeed, it was rather wonderful that their bag was kept down to such modest proportions as it was.

When we were at Stavros a submarine came into the Gulf of Orphano and sank a store-ship within 200 yards of the shore, near the mouth of the Struma. The intention of the U-boat was evidently to torpedo H.M.S. *Grafton*, but the store-ship steamed in on the weather-side of her just in time to get the torpedo full amidships, and sank at once, in only about five fathoms. H.M.S. *Grafton* and the two monitors which were lying close in sheered off as quickly as possible, but, after her daring exploit, the U-boat was seen no more and got safely away.

We received an addition to the strength of the 27th Division in July in the shape of a Middlesex Pioneer Battalion which, being principally composed of London navvies, was a great asset in road-making, and other work which entailed the shifting of earth. One hears talk of unskilled labour, but I do not really think there is such a thing. Men trained in any one class of work must always be better than the untrained, and it was quite a

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treat to see this Pioneer Battalion carrying out a task; the men never seemed to be in a hurry, but the work progressed rapidly and efficiently. A number of Macedonians were employed by the British Army in various capacities, mostly on road work, but some were enrolled as mule-drivers and put into khaki uniform. There was a story that General Briggs saw one of these drivers on the road one day, and mistaking him for a British soldier, addressed him in no very complimentary terms on his lack of cleanliness and generally unsoldierlike appearance. The man listened gravely, without understanding a word, and, when Briggs had finished, broke into a smile and said, " Bono Johnny."

Cockerill, our capable A.P.M., was entrusted with the task of raising a corps of Macedonian scouts, mostly ex-brigands (*comitadjis*), but I believe it was not a great success; they were willing to draw the pay but not to risk their lives.

I have said little about the Macedonian villages, but though there is a general family likeness, the inhabitants of them vary in race, and four neighbouring villages may quite easily be inhabited respectively by Greeks, Turks, Bulgars, or Serbs. During the spring and summer the storks take up their abode, and build their huge nests on the tops of the chimneys in most villages, and on seeing this I realized how the old story which one was told as a child, of the stork bringing the baby, arose. The British soldier, throughout my period of service in Macedonia, was extraordinarily well-behaved, and not a single instance of offences against women ever came to my notice; of course, it may have been a case of " Barkis is willin'," but that is another matter.

Sir Ian Hamilton had been good enough to put forward my name for a C.B. and would not take " no " for an

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answer, so whilst I was still at Salonika this honour was conferred on me. Until that time I had been in the unique position of being the only Major-General in the British Army with no initials after his name.

Early in September a cable from the War Office to A.H.Q. informed me that I had been appointed to command a Corps in the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, with the temporary rank of Lieutenant-General, and I was ordered to proceed forthwith to take up the appointment. By this time I was getting used to a rapid promotion quite beyond my deserts, and although, by all accounts, Mesopotamia was not a very promising proposition, and I was extremely sorry to give up command of a magnificent Division, I did think that Salonika was a "dud" show (in this I was wrong, as it eventually turned out), and that a new theatre of war would at least be a change, perhaps for the worse, but still a change.

Salonika had been interesting in many ways, and, although the fighting had been negligible, one had learnt a number of military lessons. First and foremost, the extreme value of efficient sanitary precautions. Second: that roads cannot replace railways for supply purposes; one cannot continue to supply a large force many miles beyond railhead or riverhead. Third: the fatal results of occupying malarious valleys, especially in the months of July and August. Fourth: the possibly fatal results of ordering attacks to take place without any personal knowledge of the ground. Fifth (I have made no mention of any instance of this): that it is a bad thing to exercise artillery horses in pulling empty wagons or with too light loads.

Parts of Macedonia, such as the Struma Valley, are marvellously fertile, but the country, owing to its unsettled state, has never been properly developed. When

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property has become safe, and law, order, and justice established, I think that the country must attain agricultural prosperity. I imagine also that it has other potentialities. For instance, when we cut through the spurs of the massif, in order to make the covered road previously referred to, the shaly rocks were distinctly oily to the touch. This fact, combined with the existence of hot and strongly sulphurous springs, seems to indicate the presence of oil deposits. I know that asbestos exists because I found some amongst rocks which were being broken up for road-metal, and it was of a good length.

Ravenshaw was appointed to the command of the 27th Division in my place—he was captured very shortly afterwards by an Austrian submarine, when on his way home, and remained a prisoner for the rest of the War—so I handed over to him, wrote a farewell order to the Division, to express my thanks to all ranks for their good work and military efficiency during my tenure of command, my regrets at leaving them and my best wishes for their future. Both Carter and Neilson elected to accompany me to Mesopotamia, so, after bidding farewell to General Milne and Gillman, we went off to embark for Alexandria. The voyage to that port was devoid of incident, and again the U-boats were conspicuous by their non-appearance. I ran down to see my brother at Ramleh, and then we went on to Cairo, and so to Ismailia, where we stayed the night with General Murray. He (Murray) gave me the impression of being fagged out, and I gathered, from his personal staff, that he was not at all fit and that he was doing too much work.

Whilst at Ismailia I was delighted to see Butler's Brigade of the 53rd Division, and the immense improvement visible, amongst both officers and men, since the Gallipoli days. They had now found their feet and the

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Brigade was fit for anything. I did not see Tom Mott's Brigade, but he himself came down to see me in Cairo, which was very nice and I was delighted to see him again. He gave me some account of the doings of the Division since landing in Egypt, which was all very interesting. He (Mott) was a first-rate soldier, and though he had elected, some time before the War, to retire from the Army to take up farming, he was eventually appointed to the command of the 53rd, and in this capacity was largely instrumental in the capture of Jerusalem later in the War.

We had been allotted passages to Bombay on a P. and O. liner and joined our ship at Port Said, finding amongst our fellow passengers General Sir Charles Monro, who was on his way out to take up the Commander-in-Chief-ship in India. There were a number of ladies on board who had risked the submarine peril to join their husbands in India or accompany them there. One brave woman had already made a previous attempt to get to India, but this had been frustrated by an enemy submarine which torpedoed the ship, though the passengers escaped in open boats. However, Port Said once reached, there was no further anxiety for the Captain, and the voyage to Bombay was quite pleasant, even though a trifle hot. Sir Charles was still a cripple on account of his ankle, being indeed threatened with phlebitis, so he had to sit in his own suite and keep his leg up all the time; in spite of this he remained his usual cheery self, full of jokes and stories. I was allotted a seat at that august board "the Captain's table," where my charming neighbour bore my long-winded dissertations with exemplary patience, though she was probably greatly relieved when the voyage ended.

At Aden, Skeen and Richardson, representing respectively the general and administrative sides of the Headquarters Staff in India, joined the ship and kept Sir

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Charles busy in absorbing details of the problems which confronted him. However, after reaching Bombay, Sir Charles, instead of proceeding to Simla, elected to be transferred to a cruiser, placed at his disposal by the Admiral, and sailed almost immediately to Basra to consult with Maude and see for himself what the situation was in Mesopotamia. The advent of a new Commander-in-Chief, even though he did not land, created much stir amongst the staff in Bombay, and my humble desire for information about my own onward journey received scant attention.

I got a room at the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, whilst Carter and Neilson secured rooms near by, and on the following day I found information more readily obtainable now that the excitement had somewhat simmered down. It appeared that we should perforce have to stay more than a week in Bombay before passages to Basra would be available. We were advised to take servants with us, and informed that nothing whatever was obtainable in Mesopotamia, so that all stores must be bought in Bombay. No one seemed to have a good word to say for the country; in fact, when one admitted being on one's way to Mesopotamia, the general remark was, "Oh! Well, I am very sorry for you; it is an awful country." One very useful piece of advice we did get, and that was to take shot-guns and cartridges with us; these we managed to procure in Bombay, and a most valuable asset they proved to be.

An old friend, Colonel (Toby) Hunt, was in charge of the Remount Depot at Ahmednagar, and through him I got three useful horses; one being quite the most wonderful hack I have ever ridden. He was as comfortable as an armchair in all his paces and could walk seven and canter four miles an hour. Carter and Neilson, incited thereto

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by the numerous prophets of scarcity in Mesopotamia, bought up such anamount of stores in Bombay that I became quite nervous as to the hold capacity of the ship destined to carry us and them. Indian servants, including a cook, we obtained, at extortionate wages, through a Lucknow Agency, and a real bad lot they turned out to be, with the possible exception of the cook.

The Poona racing season was in full swing, so we went up to a meeting there on the Saturday special, returning to Bombay the same night. Before the War I had been a Steward and a Member of the Committee of the Western Indian Turf Club, so I was welcomed back to the fold by Reynolds, who, most of the executive officials having again donned khaki, was combining in his own capable hands the offices of Secretary, Handicapper, and Clerk of the Course. The space in the centre of the Race-course was now a large Camp, and to my horror I saw that the new polo ground, over which much money had been expended, was now the site of rows of tents, and cut up by trenches and foot-paths. It was a Hunnish proceeding for which there was no excuse, as there was no lack of suitable camping grounds in the neighbourhood of Poona still available.

I was more than delighted to see again their Excellencies Lord and Lady Willingdon, who were, as always, kindness personified, and wanted us to stay at Government House, though this we were obliged to decline. I had, however, a long talk with both of them, and learnt a great deal about the scandal of the sick and wounded from Mesopotamia after the Ctesiphon fight. They at least had not looked on with folded hands. Thanks to their exertions, hospital accommodation in Bombay was now on a lavish scale, where every comfort and recreation for the sick and wounded were provided. Lady Willing-

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don had a supreme gift of organization, and had taken the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force and its welfare under her care, so that she had become known as its fairy godmother. Under her leadership, the ladies of Bombay had excelled themselves in providing every form of comfort for the Force, and "The Bombay Comforts Fund" was the most efficient organization of its kind that I came in contact with during the War. This was only one of her numerous activities, which included hostels and clubs for nursing sisters, clubs for British soldiers, convalescent homes for officers, and so on. In fact, there was nothing she had left undone, even to arranging pleasant holidays for both men and officers whilst on leave in India, or in Ceylon, where the hospitable planters vied with each other in the entertainment of officers on leave.

On our return that night to Bombay we were foolish enough to leave our carriage unlocked when we went to the dining-saloon, and on our return I found that some racing shark had stolen my Zeiss field-glasses. I had a particular affection for these glasses, which had been in my possession since South African days, and I was correspondingly annoyed, but my wife, on hearing of my loss, managed to get me another pair and sent them out to me.

On the Monday following our excursion to Poona, I was sitting in the spacious bar of the Yacht Club when I received a telegram from General Maude telling me to bring with me an assistant Military Secretary, if I knew of anyone suitable. Seeing K. O. Goldie, who had been for a long time on Lord Willingdon's personal staff, but had now been passed fit for service and was on his way out to join his Regiment (10th Hodson's Horse), in the same room, I went across to him and asked if he would

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take the appointment; on his agreeing we sent a wire to Lord Willingdon, now on his way to Simla, to ask him to arrange matters at Army Headquarters. This was done, and I had secured the services of the best possible officer for the job, as he was thoroughly capable, very popular, and never rubbed people up the wrong way. In fact, I had every reason to be, as General Sarrail was for another reason, "Très, très content" with my personal staff.

We embarked at last, and got Carter and Neilson's vast array of store-boxes duly stowed away, and sailed for Basra towards the end of October 1916. The ship we embarked in was carrying drafts for various regiments in Mesopotamia, and, in addition, a Territorial Field Battery, commanded by Lord Suffolk, a first-rate officer who, most unfortunately, was killed early in the following January.

The reinforcements for some of the Indian battalions were evidently not much better than raw recruits. I recollect seeing one man posted as a sentry on one of the gangways, who, after pacing up and down a few times, unrolled his suleetah (cotton-rug), laid down, and went promptly to sleep.

The voyage was uneventful until we reached the bar opposite Fao, where we ran aground; we should probably have done so in any case, but I could not resist telling my A.D.C.s that their heavy store-boxes were the cause of our misfortune. At each floodtide we made efforts to force our way through or over the mud bank, but only at the third attempt was success achieved, and we were enabled to proceed up the Shatt-el-Arab to Basra. Whilst still stuck on the bar, a steam launch came alongside in the dark, and up the rope ladder scrambled an officer who announced himself to be Fraser, and that he was my future B.G.G.S. in the IIIrd Indian Army Corps.

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CHAPTER XII

THE OPERATIONS BEFORE KUT

FRASER had been on General Brooking's staff with the 15th Indian Division, and it was very interesting to hear all the past history of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, though one could hardly characterize that history as being a cheerful one. Naturally, over nearly everyone who had been in the country at the time still lay the depression caused by the fall of Kut, about which, and the events which led to it, I am tempted to say a few words which I trust may not be considered as carping criticism.

We, as a nation, for some unknown reason, are apt to glorify the holding of fortresses, or other enceintes in which an army or force in being has shut itself up and defended itself with great heroism. And yet those of us who know anything of military history also know that for an army in being to allow itself to be surrounded means that that army is no longer pulling its full weight, and that unless relieved within a specified time it must surrender. I say nothing about the many historical examples of armies demobilizing themselves by getting shut up, but even so lately as the South African War we had the examples of Ladysmith on the one side, and Kimberley and Mafeking on the other. All these were eventually relieved, but at a great cost in lives, and moreover, the necessity for relieving them militated against the whole strategic plan of campaign ; in fact, the enemy had gained the strategic initiative and superiority.

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To get closer to things as they were in Mesopotamia, just think how we should have rejoiced if we could have bottled up a Turkish Army inside a loop of the river. Kut was an important tactical point and in addition contained a large amount of supplies, but these are minor considerations in a strategical plan, whereas an army in being is a major asset. No doubt we should have had to advance again to recapture Kut, but then we could have done so in our own time, when the organization behind the army was complete, and the army itself adequate for the task. As matters stood, arrangements had to be made in haste, successive reinforcements were hurried up the river and, without effective artillery support, flung against the Turkish positions. Doubtless the decision to hold Kut was largely influenced by political considerations, but I imagine that that age-long British mistake of despising the enemy was a factor in the minds of those who made it.

The heroic garrison had made a wonderful defence, and from time to time General Townshend had extended the date up to which he could hold out. But these alterations of dates had made things more difficult for the G.O.C.-in-C. Had the most extended one (viz. 30th April, 1916) been given in the first instance, time would have allowed for the due preparation of an almost overwhelming relief force. The garrison of Kut consisted of some 9,000 effectives, and the piecemeal attacks, by forces sent hurriedly up the river to attempt the relief, resulted in a loss of nearly 25,000 officers and men. Not that I think it was the losses which had caused the depression in the Army; rather was it the fact that, in spite of all efforts, a British force had eventually had to surrender to the Turks, with the consequent rankling feeling of failure. The fall of Kut, however regrettable, had

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nevertheless brought many benefits to the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, first and foremost amongst which I place the appointment of that master of organization, General Maude, to the chief command. The War Office had now taken over the direction of the campaign, and Maude, who had the confidence of Sir W. Robertson, could demand and get nearly all he asked for, and he knew what he wanted.

On landing at Basra, I think what surprised me most was the fact that, considering we had been in occupation since 1914, so little had been done in the way of improving this port as a base of supplies for a considerable army. Quays were almost non-existent, and all ships had to be unloaded in the stream by means of lighters, the delay thus caused being a serious consideration in view of the enemy submarine campaign and the consequent shortage of shipping. Depots of stores had been formed at most inconvenient and widely separated places, because the banks of the river were occupied by irrigated date-palm groves (and these trees were worth some £2 each). However, plans were now in operation for the proper development of the Port, and George MacMunn, who had lately taken over the appointment of Inspector-General of Communications, had, under General Maude's directions, initiated a scheme of development which, in the near future, was to make Basra one of the most efficient river-ports in the East.

We stayed at MacMunn's hospitable residence, where he royally entertained all and sundry who arrived in Basra. Carter, Neilson, and Goldie busied themselves in obtaining all the necessary tents and equipment for a Corps Headquarters Camp, whilst I occupied myself in studying the situation at the front, and in going round and seeing, under MacMunn's guidance, the various

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RUINS OF KUT, FROM THE ROOF OF GENERAL TOWNSHEND'S HOUSE.

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development works now in progress. Here I had the pleasure of first meeting that vivid personality, Miss Gertrude Bell, who afterwards became a very dear friend and most wise counsellor. She was then in charge of the "Arab Bureau" and working under Sir Percy Cox in the political department, where her intimate knowledge of the Arabs was most valuable. Rather a frail-looking woman, and no longer young, she had, before the War, travelled extensively, and entirely by herself, throughout the most remote parts of Arabia, partly because of her interest in the Arab Tribes, and partly in the cause of archæological and geographical research. Her books will always remain of absorbing interest to the traveller and archæologist alike, and her memory will live long in the land to which this most remarkable woman devoted her genius, her energies, and, finally, her life.

My staff began to gather up whilst at Basra, amongst others being Digby Shuttleworth, an old friend of Secunderabad days, and one of the keenest and most enthusiastic soldiers I have ever met. He had been appointed to the staff of the IIIrd Corps as G.S.O., and I fancy was somewhat disappointed that, after being kept in India, where he had been eating his heart out since the commencement of the War, fate and the authorities had sent him to a side-show instead of to the Western Front. However, if he was disappointed, I certainly was not, being more than delighted to have him on my staff.

Maude, who had been making an extensive tour up the Karun River and to the Nasariyeh front in spite of an attack of sand-fly fever which would have laid most men low, arrived back in Basra during our stay, and I went to dine with him on board the stern-wheeler which was about to carry him up to the front, where his staff and Head-quarters had already been sent ahead into camp. Maude

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had not applied for my services to command a Corps, and though he had made one or two suggestions, the officers in question had not been available. Probably owing to the suggestion of Freddy Maurice (also a Sherwood Forester), Sir William Robertson, though he had no personal knowledge of my capabilities, selected me for the appointment.

Whilst in Basra we went to see the Circassian and other dancing girls, who performed nightly at the local music-hall. We were really induced to go from a description given to us by the Captain of the ship in which we had come from Bombay, who had raved about the graceful dancing of one " Olga " ; but, though I was glad to have seen the performance, it was not particularly edifying to us, whatever it may have been to the Arab audience, which, for a phlegmatic race, was most enthusiastic.

Eventually, towards the middle of November we embarked with all our stores, tents, and equipment, on a screw steamer which was to take us as far as Amarah. One of the many branches of organization to which Maude had at once turned his attention was the Inland Water Transport. He had formed it into a directorate, and selected a very able officer named Grey as the head of it. Steamers had arrived from all parts of the Empire in which river navigation forms part of the commercial life of the country. The Indus, the Irrawady, and the Nile had all furnished their quota ; some of the boats were sternwheelers, others paddle, and others again screw steamers. These were all numbered and classified, and bore their numbers and classification painted on them ; e.g., S.1 signified Sternwheeler No. 1, and P.3 Paddle Steamer No. 3. Every steamer had a lighter or barge lashed one on each side of her, not only for the purpose

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of carrying more stores, but also to lessen the shocks of collisions with the banks, particularly whilst passing through that portion of the Tigris, below Amarah, known as the Narrows. This was the low-water season, but even then the strength of the current of this great river made our progress somewhat slow. When we reached the Narrows, Marsh Arabs followed along the bank, demanding "Bakshish" with great insistence, and anything, such as empty cigarette tins or bits of cloth, was at once retrieved from the river by naked men and boys, the cloth especially provoking the keenest emulation.

One of the landmarks of this part of the journey is Ezra's Tomb. Not that, except for its loneliness in absolutely flat country, it is in any respect remarkable, but it has the cachet of being historical, and, as we approached it about sunset, the blue dome surrounded by a few date-palms gave an effect of grandeur which it is far from deserving. Before reaching Amarah, and whilst still in the Narrows, our engine broke down, entailing a delay of some hours, so we landed with the newly acquired guns to look for that noble bird the black partridge. We got a few brace, but wasted most of our time by walking away from instead of along the river bank, where these birds generally lie. Eventually we reached Amarah, where we found the 13th Division (old friends of Gallipoli days), now under command of General Cayley. Brownrigg, who had only been promoted a Captain shortly before the War, now filled the position of A.Q.M.G., and extremely well he did so. Maude had made no mistake when he, as Divisional Commander, had selected Brownrigg as his Chief Administrative Staff Officer. At Amarah all our camp equipment and stores were landed, because after that point the river navigation became more intricate and our boat drew too much water for the onward journey.

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The 13th Division formed one part of the IIIrd Corps. The 14th Indian Division, whose Headquarters were at Es Sinn, on the right bank of the Tigris, together with Corps Troops, formed the other. The 13th, which had been brought back from the front to recuperate at Amarah in August, now looked fit and ready for any further effort that might be required of it. We stayed at Amarah for two days, until another boat was ready to take us on to riverhead at Sheikh Saad, and heard all about the adventures of the Division since we had last seen it after the Suvla evacuation. The losses had been severe, but it was easy to see that all ranks were now in good heart. I was very pleased to meet here Roderick Petre, my very efficient Staff Captain in the 87th Brigade in Gallipoli. The one point of interest in Amarah is the Christian sect called Sabæans, the members of which claim to be descendants of Saint John the Baptist. These people are silversmiths by trade, and make various articles such as salvers, cigarette boxes, and napkin rings, in plain silver, but decorated with local designs, such as river scenes, by some secret process in which black antimony plays the principal part.

When a boat became available, our mass of equipment was loaded into the attendant barges, and again we continued our journey to Sheikh Saad, where we duly arrived about the middle of November and pitched a temporary camp. Here we heard wonderful stories of Arab thieves who were credited with the most amazing feats. They were stated to have not only stolen large tents from inside a barbed-wire enclosure guarded by sentries at fifty yards' intervals, but to have taken a wagon and the necessary mules, also from the enclosure, in which to carry away their loot, all without being observed by the watchful (?) sentries. They had even

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stolen beds and bedding on which officers were sleeping, without waking the occupants.

At Sheikh Saad other members of my staff arrived to join IIIrd Corps Headquarters, amongst them being General Willoughby, the D.A. and Q.M.G. Colonel Capper, and Major Kauntze. I duly went to report my arrival to General Maude, whose Headquarters camp, a vast village of tents, was situated on the opposite or left bank of the Tigris and connected with riverhead by a 400 yards long pontoon bridge. This bridge had no side protection, and I rode over it in some trepidation, and then discovered that it was against orders and that I should have dismounted and led my horse over it. I certainly would much sooner have done so!

Maude suggested to me that, as my Corps would have to operate on the right bank, I had better prospect for a suitable Headquarters, so on the following day Fraser and I set off for this purpose in a motor. We bumped along many weary miles, and finally decided that a position between railhead (of the narrow-gauge line from Sheikh Saad to Es Sinn) and the Dujailah redoubt was as good as anything else. This position was well up to the front, close to the railway, near the 14th Division, with a water-supply, and therefore had much to recommend it.

I took the opportunity of seeing General Raleigh Egerton, commanding the 14th Division, and finding out how his command was disposed on the ground. One brigade was in reserve, one was holding trenches along the river line, whilst the third occupied some redoubts (Dujailah—the Pentagon—Imam Mansur) as well as trenches, against any attack by the Turks from their position on the Hai River. Fraser and I, having selected the position of our future Headquarters, returned to Sheikh Saad, where he almost at once developed sand-

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fly fever and, much to his disgust, the medical authorities sent him off down the river to hospital at Basra.

Two days later we moved to our new Headquarters near Es Sinn, and I was able to get a better idea of the position as well as to become more intimately acquainted with the brigades and battalions composing the 14th Division, as also the Corps Troops, Cavalry, Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, and Medical Services. The town of Kut was plainly visible from Es Sinn, and, except for the mounds of ancient canal banks, the country was as flat as a table, with one notable exception, the Dujailah depression. This depression ran from the Tigris right bank some distance up-stream of Magasis, past the tomb of Imam Mansur, Es Sinn railway terminus, and the Dujailah redoubt. It was about 150 yards wide and six feet or more below the level of the surrounding flat country, and the scrub, a sort of stunted and thorny acacia, growing in it, gave cover to black partridges, jackals, and wild cats. The gunners of the 14th Division had a few hounds with which they hunted jackals, and the covers drawn were the thick belts of scrub in the depression. In our leisure time some of us used to get a little shooting both at the few survivors amongst the partridges and at the numerous sand grouse which came in big flights over our camp on their way to and from water.

The task set before General Maude, as contained in the instructions issued to him, was not an easy though it was a limited one, namely, to regain possession of Kut, by manœuvre if possible. If that proved too difficult, at least he was to gain complete control of the right bank of the Tigris, and of the Hai waterway; but he was also warned that he must not incur heavy losses, because reinforcements would be a difficulty.

The water-supply for the 14th Division and Corps

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Troops, as well as for part of the 3rd Division (of the Ist Corps) was brought from the Tigris by means of open aqueducts, the pumping station being at Magasis. There were also three wells sunk in the Dujailah depression. The water in these wells was only some eight feet below the surface, and, as it remained at the same level, the obvious inference was that this old course of the Tigris was still a river, though an underground one, and capable of further tapping and expansion. The 13th Division would shortly be arriving on the scene, and in addition, water would have to be provided for the Cavalry Division, so we proceeded at once to sink a number of wells, altogether another fourteen, and in each we found excellent water which remained constant. I was the more impelled to have these wells sunk in that I did not like to place entire dependence on the Magasis pumping station, which could easily have been put out of action by a concentrated hostile artillery bombardment. Had the existence of this water-supply been known during the relief operations, the force under General Aylmer, which had made a successful night march to the Sinn position, need never have had to retrace its steps owing to lack of water, and Kut might not have had to submit to the ignominy of surrender.

General Maude was very keen to start the offensive against the Turks at the earliest possible moment, and chafed at any delay which meant losing opportunities created by the coolness of the season and a low river with no risk of floods. He took his Corps Commanders (Cobbe and myself) into his confidence as to his intended initial plans and move. Briefly stated, the Ist Corps was to make a strong demonstration against the Turkish position at Sannaiyat whilst the Cavalry Division and IIIrd Corps advanced during the hours of darkness and seized

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the line of the Hai. I thought it well, therefore, to make a personal reconnaissance of the enemy positions on this river, so asked for and obtained the use of an aeroplane for the purpose. With that expert flyer De Havilland as pilot I made my first trip in the air and was taken safely over the Turkish lines and brought equally safely and comfortably back to our starting-point. From this first experience I realized that the proper training of an observer is a matter of time and practice. Luckily I had the excellent maps of the Turkish trenches compiled from air photographs to assist me, otherwise I think my impressions would have remained confused; in fact, I grasped that in air observation one should at first severely limit one's objective and ca' canny in the number of points to make note of.

The 13th Division arrived from Amarah and went into bivouac on the edge of the Dujailah depression, near IIIrd Corps Headquarters, and then my ancient enemy, influenza, got me in its grip, and for three days I was laid low.

The preliminary orders for Maude's first move came to hand and I found that the Cavalry Division was to start at a later hour than the Division (13th) which I had selected to seize the line of the Hai, and would therefore not only be in front of the infantry but would even cross its front during the projected night-march. One never knows, even with the best of troops, when a panic may be caused, and the idea of mounted troops galloping back through the lines of advancing infantry, in the hours of darkness and at a time when everyone's vitality is at its lowest, gave me furiously to think, and I intimated my fears to General Money (the Chief of the General Staff).

However, on the 11th December I received a message from General Maude to say that, if I was sufficiently

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recovered, he would like me to come over to his Headquarters for a consultation, but that if I could not manage it I was to send my senior General Staff Officer. I thought I could manage it in a motor, so we started, but owing to rain during the previous night, we soon stuck in the mud, and I had then to do the fifteen miles there on horseback. It was not exactly the kind of treatment which one's medical adviser would have prescribed, but I got there all right and gained my point about the cavalry, which it was decided should take a route on the flank of and not in front of the infantry. I rode back the fifteen miles, and next day felt comparatively fit again, and very grateful to Toby Hunt for supplying me with such a treasure of a horse.

General Maude regarded thirteen as his lucky number, so, perhaps partly for that reason, the 13th December was selected as an appropriate day for the first stroke in his offensive campaign to take place, and I chose the 13th Division to carry out, in conjunction with the Cavalry Division, the night march and subsequent seizure of the line of the Hai. The 14th Division and Corps Troops were retained as Corps Reserve.

During the night of the 13th/14th December I went forward and established a small advanced Headquarters at Imam Mansur, and General Maude, also with a small staff, occupied my old camp at Es Sinn. The night march came off without a hitch, and by daybreak on the 14th the cavalry was across the river, which at this season was not a flowing stream, the bed of it being dry in long stretches, both above and below Atab, the point on which the march had been directed. Very few Turks had been encountered, so at daybreak the cavalry moved up-stream on the right bank whilst the 13th Division pushed along the left bank. It soon became apparent,

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however, that the cavalry, owing to the deep-cut irrigation canals which are always deepest near the river, could not move close enough to the right bank, so I directed General Cayley to send one of his brigades across to assist. This did not altogether meet with Maude's approval, but I could not see how it could be avoided. The force continued to push on until the leading formations, after passing a bend in the otherwise comparatively straight bed of the Hai, came under effective rifle-fire from the main Turkish trench system, and there the infantry halted and dug themselves in.

The cavalry, moving wide on the flank, succeeded in penetrating farther towards the Dahra bend and even in shelling the Turkish bridge over the Tigris. At dusk the cavalry withdrew to the left bank of the Hai, and the leading Brigades (38th and 39th) of the 13th Division continued to consolidate their positions on the left and right banks respectively, without much interference from the enemy.

During this operation the Ist Corps had continued its demonstrations against the Turkish positions at Sannaiyat.

I have attempted to show on the rough sketch the general position occupied by the army under General Maude, and in this connexion I must point out what I thought at the time, and still think, was a flaw in the dispositions.

During the operations which took place in the early spring, for the relief of General Townshend's beleaguered force, the 7th Division had twice attacked the Turkish position at Sannaiyat; since April it had remained facing these same lines, and had made its own position practically impregnable. Now it is a human, and perhaps very natural, assumption to imagine that, if one's own position

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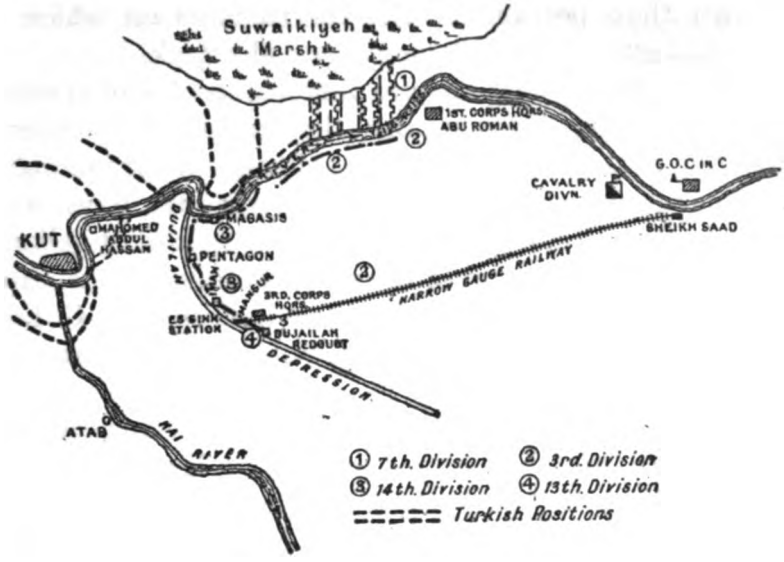

SKETCH SHOWING DISPOSITION OF GENERAL MAUDE'S ARMY ON THE TIGRIS IN DECEMBER, 1916

is unassailable, the enemy's is even more so, and for that reason I think that this particular Division should have been replaced by a fresh unit and sent to some other position.

Having established himself on the Hai, Maude now turned his attention to that portion of the Turkish forces which was holding a strong position in the Khaidairi Bend known as the Mohamed Abdul Hassan trenches, and the 3rd Division of the Ist Corps was detailed to capture this stronghold, the Corps Artillery 60-pounders of both Ist and IIIrd Corps to assist in the operations as well as several batteries of the 14th Divisional Artillery. Whilst General Keary carried out the task allotted to his Division, the enemy forces both at Sannaiyat and on the Hai were to be kept pinned to their ground by demonstrations.

Needless to say, I was most careful not to demonstrate

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against those portions of the Hai trenches on which I intended eventually to launch my real attack.

The reduction and capture of Mohamed Abdul Hassan entailed severe fighting, but thanks to the excellent shooting of the artillery and the gallantry of the infantry, the operation, which extended over some ten days, was completely successful. The Turks put up a most gallant fight, and the losses were heavy on both sides. A captured document set forth that the Turkish C.-in-C. had greatly appreciated the bravery of his men and that " he kissed their eyes."

During the time that this engagement was in progress, the 14th Division had moved over to the Hai, and whilst two brigades of the 13th Division had pushed their trenches forward on the left bank of the Hai, the other brigade had done the same on the right bank, as also had a brigade of the 14th Division. We were now within assaulting distance of my first objective, viz. the somewhat sharp salient formed by the Turkish trenches.

Bright, an old friend, had joined the IIIrd Corps as B.G.R.A. Fraser had rejoined from hospital. Corps Headquarters had moved forward to Atab, and the camp was pitched on the right bank of the Hai on clean ground, which, wonderful to relate, was covered with grass. On my way to the Hai, for the purpose of selecting a suitable camp, Carter and I saw an Arab bitch, a better-looking specimen than usual, and of a dark sable colour with a bob tail, jump out of an old Turkish rifle-pit ; on looking into it we saw half a dozen jolly-looking pups, so we took one little woolly fellow, also sable with bob-tail complete. We kept him a long time, and whilst still young he was an engaging little beast and a great favourite, but as he got older he became a regular Arab " pi-dog," with a strong tendency to revert to the wild.

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There was some shooting to be got on the Hai amongst the thorny scrub and liquorice, but one could not go far afield on account of marauding Arabs who just at first were somewhat of a nuisance. My Corps Cavalry (two squadrons of the 32nd Lancers) got into a little trouble one day, when a party of their scouts was ambushed by Arabs, and lost a British officer and two other ranks killed. Keogh, in command of the two squadrons, promptly charged and scattered the Arabs, thus recovering the bodies, but not before they had been stripped naked. The Arab performs this feat of completely stripping a body with most wonderful celerity, and does it to British or Turkish dead quite impartially.

I now took away from the Divisions their Cavalry Squadrons, namely, one squadron Herts Yeomanry of the 13th Division, and one squadron of the 10th Hodson's Horse of the 14th Division. These, with the two squadrons of the 32nd Lancers, I formed into a mobile force, under command of Colonel H. G. Young of the 10th, for the purpose of keeping Arab marauders at a safe distance. We laid a few traps for these nuisances, and, having decoyed them within easy range, let the gunners deal with them, after which they kept well away and gave us no further trouble. Young also did good work in raiding, and bringing in forage and sheep, which all helped the supply situation.

The railway from Es Sinn was rapidly extended through Imam Mansur as far as Atab, and three pontoon bridges were run over the Hai to facilitate communications. Weeks, the R.E. officer in command of the bridging train, was remarkably efficient at his work, and whenever and wherever one wanted a bridge, it was there in a few hours.

In pursuance of the policy of manœuvre, General

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Maude conceived the idea of turning the Suwaikiyeh Marsh with the Cavalry Division, and reconnaissances were carried out to this end, but when the column started the wind was blowing strongly from the north-east, and the water in the lake or marsh moved with it, so, in the dark, the Division nearly suffered the fate of Pharaoh's host. The guns sank so deep that they were only rescued with considerable difficulty, and the enterprise was abandoned.

Some rain early in January, evidently accompanied by the melting of snow in the Caucasus, caused a rise in the Tigris and consequently a flow of water down the Hai, but with our bridges in position this caused no inconvenience. Towards the middle of that month I submitted my plan of attack against the Turkish trenches on the Hai to General Maude for his approval.

Briefly, my plan was the strictly limited objective, combined with a perpetual offensive, and careful preparations for the defeat of hostile counter-attacks by means of artillery and machine guns. Our first objective was to be the nose of the salient, and for this attack the 39th Brigade under Andrus, and the 40th Brigade under Lewin were detailed; the former to capture that portion of the salient which lay on the right bank, while Lewin seized that on the left bank. Maude approved of the plan, and the attack started on 19th January, 1917. Bright had made most careful arrangements for his artillery preparation and all his guns had been unobtrusively registered during preceding days. H.E. shells were plentiful, and dumps of these were formed not too far from the batteries. Aeroplane observation had been arranged, and in addition each battery had ladders to get above the almost constant mirage and allow the commanders to rectify ranges.

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The evening before the attack took place, I went round to see Lewin and Andrus to impress upon them that on no account must they allow their men to go beyond their objectives. I found Lewin, with whom was Candler ("Eye-witness"), very cheerful and full of confidence about the morrow, but on visiting Andrus I thought the atmosphere somewhat lacking in enthusiasm and even pessimistic.

The artillery preparation left nothing to be desired in so far as the actual trenches were concerned, but we had not yet completely fathomed the wily Turk, and only discovered later that, well in front of his trenches, machine guns lay hidden which had entirely escaped the attention of our guns and howitzers. When the infantry went over the top, these machine guns took heavy toll, but the gallant fellows gained all their objectives in spite of this galling fire. The Turkish counter-attack started almost at once, but was defeated and driven back by shrapnel and machine guns. Again and again the enemy launched his counter-attacks, which he continued to do throughout the rest of the day, but they were all repelled with heavy losses.

Nevertheless, the 39th Brigade had been subjected to a very harassing fire from some minenwerfer, which our artillery was unable to destroy, and after suffering heavy losses they began to retire. Andrus at once sent up his reserve, and the Royal Warwicks, led by their Colonel, charged gallantly forward to try to redeem the situation. The gallant C.O. fell dead, and, though the bulk of the Battalion reached the trenches, it was later driven out. Dusk fell with the enemy in occupation of his front line on the right bank, though Lewin's Brigade on the left bank still held its gains and consolidated them. General Maude was most sympathetic

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about this partial failure, and had nothing but praise for the gallantry of the battalions of the 39th Brigade.

I saw Andrus personally, and found him very anxious to try again the following day. But I thought a fresh brigade was indicated, so I withdrew the 39th, replacing it with Walton's Brigade of the 14th Division. The following morning the attack was repeated on the right bank, and with the assistance of Lewin on one side, and Thomson's Brigade of the 14th on the other, the objective was gained, two counter-attacks were defeated with heavy loss, the ground held was consolidated, and, by bombing outwards, the line was greatly extended.

Turkish observation was so good from the minaret and roofs of houses in Kut that surprise was not easy, but as I thought the enemy would expect the attack to be continued on the same line, I was determined to disappoint him. The guns had been registered, during the second day's fighting, on the Turkish trenches touching the right bank of the Tigris, and, after due preparation, these were rushed and captured by O'Dowda's Brigade of the 13th Division. The gains were held against one counter-attack, and duly consolidated; then the bombing parties worked to their left and joined up with Lewin. The gradual nibbling at bits of the enemy trenches and the defeat of all counter-attacks, which became less strenuous and frequent as our attacks went on, continued with occasional set-backs, due to over-keenness on the part of the infantry, who sometimes could not be restrained from going beyond their objectives. A serious example of this occurred in the case of the 36th and 45th Sikhs when these two splendid regiments dashed forward to meet the Turkish counter-attack with the bayonet, thus blanketing our guns. They were driven back with such heavy losses

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that they had to be withdrawn for some time to re-organize. Gunning, commanding the 36th, was wounded, and Rattray, commanding the regiment raised by his grandfather, 45th Rattray's Sikhs, was killed. I had taken the precaution of keeping out of action a proportion of British and Indian officers, and these were now available for the task of re-forming their regiments. The Subadar-Major (Senior Indian Officer) of the 45th had lost his only son, also an officer in the regiment, and when I wrote to condole, he answered that he was a proud man that day to have been able to give his son's life in the cause of his King-Emperor. When one knows what a son means to an Indian, one realizes what a depth of loyalty that King-Emperor has justly inspired amongst his Indian soldiers.

Lewin and O'Dowda succeeded in clearing all the ground between the left bank of the Hai and the right bank of the Tigris, and both brigades were then transferred to the other bank of the Hai, Andrus's Brigade being left to hold the captured terrain and protect the guns which were pushed farther forward towards Kut. There was then a slight pause in the operations until the left could work forward near enough for another spring.

Whenever one or both of the divisions were engaged in an attack, an officer of Corps Headquarters Staff joined it as liaison officer, so that he could report direct and thus leave the Divisional Commander free to devote himself to the task in hand. Shuttleworth, who always went to the 13th Division, eventually came to be known as " the stormy petrel " because directly the staff saw him coming they knew that orders for attack would follow quickly on his heels. Fraser proved to be invaluable, his orders being models of brevity and lucidity, whilst his advice and suggestions were always sound.

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During this period of the fighting, I thought that one of the factors which most dismayed the Turks was the array of artillery observation ladders, which day by day they saw had crept forward as the batteries advanced their positions during the hours of darkness. This class of fighting meant very hard work for the men who had to dig at night and fight during the day, but success was attending their efforts, so that they were as keen as possible and there was practically no sickness. I need hardly say that after my experiences in both Gallipoli and Salonika, sanitary precautions bulked largely in every operation, and the sites of camps or bivouacs when vacated by formations were left spotlessly clean and all rubbish destroyed by incineration.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE VICTORY AT KUT

I HAVE said nothing about the casualties incurred in the protracted fighting which eventually left us masters of the Hai salient, but, though severe, they were far surpassed by those of the enemy; indeed, I think it is accurate to say that after each successful assault we ourselves buried more Turkish dead than our own total casualties, including slightly wounded cases, amounted to. Although all ranks and all services had fought and worked hard for the results gained, yet, when I was asked to submit names of those who had most distinguished themselves, I had no hesitation in selecting Fraser, Lewin, Thomson, Cassels, Bright, and O'Dowda as the "big six."

General Maude had during all this time utilized the Cavalry Division, not only to create diversions on our left flank but even farther afield. I have already mentioned the attempt to turn the Suwaikyieh lake, after which the Division was sent on a raiding expedition to Hai town, a centre and stronghold of the semi-hostile Muntafik Arabs, partly to overawe this turbulent tribe and in part to ease the supply situation. At Hai town there was abundance of grain and sheep, so that the Division could for a time live on the country, and when it left it came away with its supply carts loaded.

The Arabs had made no resistance to the occupation of the town, and this perhaps lulled Crocker into a false sense of security; at all events when, after about a week,

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the Division left, only a small rear-guard was detailed to cover the withdrawal, and this was attacked by hordes of Arabs. Crocker at once sent a wireless message asking for assistance, and I received orders to dispatch an Infantry Brigade to his rescue.

I did not greet this order with much enthusiasm, being strongly of opinion that a Cavalry Division was or should be quite capable of looking after itself, and certainly more fitted to fight a rear-guard action against Arabs than infantry could possibly be. However, I detailed Thomson's Brigade, together with a battery of artillery and a small bridging train, for the purpose. But I was not very hurried over the preparation of the column, so that it had not proceeded far on its way when I received orders for its recall. The Cavalry Division had extricated itself by its own unaided efforts.

Until the narrow-gauge railway had been extended to Atab, the difficulties of supply necessitated the cavalry being kept near Sheikh Saad. But when the line was completed, the Division marched across and encamped permanently on the right bank of the Hai, and was utilized by General Maude to create diversions on my left flank.

One of these consisted in an attempt to bridge the Tigris at the toe of the next loop up-stream of the Shumran bend, in which the Cavalry Division, Lewin's Brigade, and a huge bridging train took part. But as this long column carried out its march in broad daylight and in full view of the Turks, it did not succeed; nor could I think that it was ever intended to do so. In fact, I regarded it merely as a feint to induce the enemy to disperse his strength. Maude rode over the next day to condole with Crocker and Lewin on the failure of the attempt. He told me this, and I was so astonished that I blurted out:

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"But you didn't really mean them to cross." He averred that he had, but though he was essentially a truthful man I remained unconvinced.

Crocker continued to carry out reconnaissances on my left, and the information supplied by him led General Maude to believe that it would be feasible to interpose a force between the Shumran and Dahra bends, and effectually isolate the latter, in one operation. Accordingly I received instructions to carry out this scheme with two brigades by means of a night operation, the idea being that one brigade should on the following morning be facing towards the Dahra bend and the other towards Shumran. I ventured to protest on the ground that this area had not been reconnoitred and was therefore *terra incognita*, but was assured that "the cavalry had been all over it." I knew that this was not the case, though I could not well say so, nor could I further oppose the scheme.

Lewin's and O'Dowda's Brigades, lately transferred from the left bank of the Hai, were detailed to carry out the project. They ran into a hornet's nest, finding the enemy in considerable strength and, on the morning following the night march, were subjected to a galling fire in their shallow and incomplete trenches, losing many valuable officers and men. I went to see Maude personally and explained that I considered the situation of these two brigades to be a dangerous one, and that, if he would allow me to withdraw them, I would guarantee to occupy the position within three days if allowed to carry it out in my own way. He was good enough to agree, and before the three days had elapsed the Turkish redoubts in this area had been cleared, Campbell's Brigade of the 3rd Division, temporarily attached to IIIrd Corps, was in possession, and the Dahra bend was effectually isolated.

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Meanwhile, on 6th February the IIIrd Corps started on its task of clearing the Dahra bend, and by employing the same tactics which had been so successful in the reduction of the Hai salient, this series of operations came to a successful conclusion during the night of 15th/16th by the capture of all the Turks who had not been able to get across the river. The captures during the final day and night amounted to over 2,000 prisoners, but the commander (Ismail Hakki) and most of the senior officers, as well as large numbers of the rank and file, had sought safety on the farther bank of the Tigris. During the operations the sixty-pounders had, by splendid shooting, put the Turkish bridge at Shumran out of action; this was invaluable because it removed the chance of a counter-attack against our left flank out of the region of probability.

I was not altogether happy about pushing my troops right into the Dahra bend, for it was a re-entrant in the enemy line, indeed almost a defile, where they would be exposed to fire from both flanks, even though these flanks were on the other side of a broad river. So, having selected a possible crossing, I suggested to General Maude that I should first push a force across and capture Kut, in order to hold at least one flank. However, having other plans in view, he vetoed the proposal, and we had to make the best of it—I saw afterwards how wise his decision was.

Providence had been on our side throughout these somewhat lengthy operations, which had lasted from 19th January to 15th February, and the weather had remained almost perfect throughout. There had been a few showers of rain, though nothing to signify. But on the final night of the 15th/16th the rain came down in earnest and caused floods everywhere. It is difficult

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for those who do not know the country to realize what the effects of heavy rain can be in a flat alluvial plain like Mesopotamia. The rivers do not carry off the water, because their banks are somewhat higher than the surrounding country. The soil is not absorbent, so that the water remains on the surface until dried off by sun and wind; the mud is very bad and movement is rendered difficult if not impossible. The Turkish officers who had been taken prisoners told me that they had been praying for rain to put a stop to our operations, and, had their prayers been answered, the consequences might have proved awkward for us; at the best our attack would have had to be suspended for several days. I cannot speak highly enough of the work done, and the gallantry displayed, by the troops under my command during the whole of this period; it was a great feat of arms and at each continued success their *moral* rose higher and higher.

General Maude now initiated his proposal to force a passage of the Tigris, and so cut the enemy's line of retreat from Sannaiyat and Kut, and asked me to submit a scheme for carrying it out. Reconnaissances were made, and the Shumran bend was selected as the most advantageous place. The plan was drawn out and submitted for approval, and, as soon as sanction was accorded, I began the preparations.

The first essential was, if possible, to deceive the enemy, and to this end all our artillery was drawn up facing Kut, the battery observation ladders forming a complete semicircle near the mouth of the Hai; pontoons were launched in that river and crews were practised in rowing them as much under Turkish observation as possible; the garrison of the Liquorice Factory was provided with mallets and planks so that sounds of

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hammerings and splashings should be heard in Kut each night, and a slow bombardment of the town was kept up. General Maude ordered that the minaret was to be respected, but some battery made a bad shot and knocked the top off. It was a pity, of course, but it could not be helped, and no one got into serious trouble over it.

I selected Egerton's Division (14th) to carry out the crossing, and it was arranged that there should be three ferries of pontoons; No. 1 at the toe of the Peninsula, No. 2 some seven hundred yards, and No. 3 about twelve hundred yards, down-stream. R.E. officers were detailed to prepare the necessary ramps and organize the ferries. The pontoons both for these and the projected bridge near No. 1 were taken to their positions during darkness and, as there was no possible cover from aeroplane observation, laid out in the form of trenches, complete with traverses; what they looked like from the air, I do not know, but anyhow the ruse seems to have effectively deceived the Turks. Sites for guns, howitzers, and machine guns were selected round both sides of the Shumran bend and after being dug were concealed with brushwood.

I had suggested to Egerton that the first units to cross should be three Gurkha battalions, but he strongly urged that the covering force should contain at least one British battalion. Therefore the Norfolk Regiment was selected to cross at No. 1 ferry whilst the Gurkhas utilized Nos. 2 and 3.

In my original orders the ferries were timed to start at 3 a.m., but Egerton, having consulted his Brigadiers and Battalion Commanders, was very unfavourable to this hour and strongly urged a daylight operation. With the recent experience of Gallipoli in my mind, I was unable to agree. But I eventually said that, if he would put

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down on paper the reasons for his preference, I would forward them to General Maude for his final decision, but that I would also tell him that I did not approve. Maude wrote back to say that there were reasons for and against making the attempt in daylight, but that, as Egerton and his subordinate commanders wished it, he thought I might concede the point. I therefore sent for Egerton and, whilst informing him of the Army Commander's decision, stipulated that at least the first ferries should start half an hour before daybreak.

On the evening of the 22nd February, when the various columns were marching to their positions of readiness, a hostile aeroplane flew over and saw the whole movement. But, as luck would have it, for the purpose of avoiding some swampy ground which had not yet dried up, all the columns were at the time heading towards the mouth of the Hai.

That night all the guns, howitzers, machine guns, and infantry took up their prepared positions round the Shumran bend, though, at Davis's (C.R.A. 13th Division) suggestion, the observation ladders were left in position facing Kut. The Turks were completely deceived by our little *ruses de guerre* and even during the morning of the 23rd, whilst our real passage of the river was in progress, they were still hurriedly improving the river defences of Kut.

After the heavy rain of the 16th and 17th, accompanied by the melting of the snows in the Caucasus, the Tigris came down in such heavy flood that for the first forty-eight hours, when the top scurry was at its strongest, I do not think that the two anchor-laying boats, available for the bridging train—two ship's dinghies equipped with Evenrude engines—would have been able to stem the current. But gradually the river steadied

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itself, the top scurry disappeared, and the rapidity of the current became uniform throughout its depth.

The Hampshire Regiment had been selected to supply the rowers for the pontoons. The oars were muffled and, half an hour before daybreak, the ferries started. No. 1 safely landed the first contingent of Norfolks without any alarm being raised, and the party was forming up quietly on the strand when a number of the enemy were seen against the skyline moving towards them. Prompt action was called for; the party dashed forward and succeeded in capturing the whole body of surprised Turks. Three hundred prisoners were thus taken as well as five machine guns, and to the promptitude and dash of this fine regiment the eventually successful passage of the Tigris was largely due.

Nos. 2 and 3 also safely landed their contingents of Gurkhas, but the Turkish posts there were more on the alert and the alarm was given; nevertheless our men established themselves and hung on to their positions with the greatest gallantry. No. 1 continued to make successful trips, and the Norfolks pushed forward and secured a bridgehead. The second attempted trips at Nos. 2 and 3 were fiascos; it was then daylight and the laden pontoons were at once riddled by machine-gun fire; some were sunk and others drifted helplessly down the river filled with dead and wounded. Our guns in vain tried to smother these machine guns; nevertheless, under cover of a heavy barrage, a third trip was attempted which met with the same lamentable fate. These two ferries were now closed down and all further efforts concentrated on No. 1, which continued to work smoothly and efficiently throughout the day.

As soon as the Norfolks had secured a bridgehead, the bridging train started work and, though exposed

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to hostile artillery fire throughout the day, by 4.30 p.m., the bridge, some 350 yards long, across this big river in high flood, was complete, and ran as straight as a line from bank to bank.

Meanwhile, Egerton had been pushing forward with his Division, and was now in possession of a large portion of the Peninsula, having captured many hundreds of prisoners, as well as guns, machine guns, and war material of all sorts. The Turks, favoured by entrenchments and watercuts, were keeping a stubborn hold on the base of the Peninsula, and were especially strong on the left (western flank). As soon as the bridge was complete, the balance of the 14th Division passed over, followed that night by the 13th. Ambulances crossed and returned with the wounded, who were at once attended to by the Field Ambulances and conveyed to the railway, to be taken thence to Sheikh Saad.

The infantry dug themselves in on the ground gained and renewed the attack at daybreak on the following day, but the enemy were fighting hard to allow time for their troops from Kut and Sannaiyat to get away, and, though gaining more ground, we could not altogether break through the stubborn defence. The Cavalry Division now crossed the bridge and bivouacked on the Peninsula, and I also crossed with my advance Headquarters. Notwithstanding all this traffic and the tremendous current sweeping against it, this wonderful bridge remained as straight as ever. I regard this passage of the Tigris in flood as an outstanding feat of arms, worthy of the distinguished soldier who conceived it, and an historical monument to the gallantry of the troops who carried it out.

During the night of the 24th/25th February, the enemy rear-guard, which had so stoutly carried out its

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rôle, abandoned its position and the way was clear for pursuit.

I must now hark back to say a few words about medium artillery and its forms of traction. The IIIrd Corps artillery consisted of two batteries of 60-pounders to which were added, during the fighting on the Hai, a further 60-pounder battery and one of 6-inch howitzers from army troops. Only one of these batteries was drawn by horses; the others depended on tractors. The 6-inch howitzers did not interest me much, being out of date and both slow and inaccurate in their shooting; but the 60-pounder is a splendid weapon and its fire effects excellent, whether with shrapnel or high explosive. When we had to transport these batteries over the Hai, it was found possible to get the guns across the pontoon bridges by hand (also of course the horses), but the tractors were a different proposition, and it was only the luck of finding an abandoned Turkish barge on this river that enabled the sappers to make a flying bridge capable of transporting them. In operating in any country one is almost bound to come up against the same problem, and in the war of movement which had now developed, the tractor-drawn medium batteries did not and could not take their full part.

Whilst the IIIrd Corps had been engaged in the operation which I have attempted to describe, Cobbe had been hammering at the Sannaiyat lines with characteristic vigour and making raids across the Tigris from the right bank. The 7th Division continued to seize and hold Turkish trenches, whilst the enemy counter-attacks were defeated with heavy loss by artillery and machine guns from both banks. Then Cobbe found the enemy disappearing from his front and at once pushed vigorously on over trenches choked with Turkish dead.

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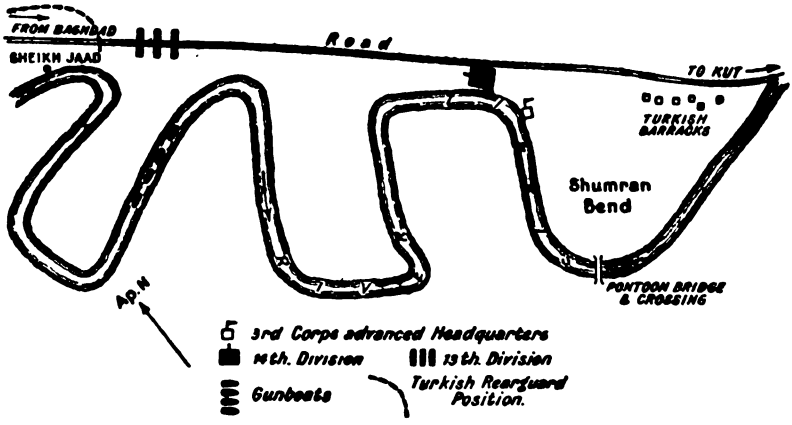

SKETCH TO SHOW THE BIG LOOPS OF THE TIGRIS NORTH OF KUT. THE POSITIONS OF IIIRD CORPS AND GUNBOATS AT 12 NOON ON 25TH FEBRUARY 1917

Special units were detailed to clear the battlefields, and the Ist Corps, passing Kut by, followed rapidly on the heels of the IIIrd Corps.

At daybreak on the 24th Maude issued orders for the pursuit of the flying Turks by the Royal Navy, the Cavalry Division, and IIIrd Corps. Then followed a series of blunders.

The Cavalry Division moved out, followed by the 13th Division, along the Baghdad road, whilst the naval gunboats went full steam ahead and, only stopping to hoist the Union Jack in Kut, kept on round the enormous loops of the river north of that place. What the orders to the cavalry were, I do not know, but, instead of pushing on to head and cut off the main body of the demoralized enemy, the Division hung about wide on the flank and missed an opportunity for cavalry action which could only occur about once in a century. Cayley, with the 13th Division, eventually came up with the Turkish rear-guard holding a strongly entrenched

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position at Sheikh Jaad, with its right resting on the Tigris and its left well thrown back; his leading brigade, after driving in the enemy advanced posts, came under heavy fire from the main position and was checked. Instead of at once pushing on round the enemy flank with his two remaining brigades, Cayley continued to keep these in reserve and pinned his faith on the Cavalry Division outflanking the enemy. It was anyhow an entire misconception of the tactical situation; being only opposed by a rear-guard, he should have thrown his whole force against it; there was no necessity to retain a reserve, particularly as he knew that the 14th Division was behind him.

As soon as I received a report of the situation, I ordered him to outflank and attack with every available man; but time, that invaluable factor in war (we cannot like Joshua command the sun to stand still), was slipping away, and by the time the troops were in position to attack, it was almost dark. Still the attack took place and was immediately successful, large numbers of prisoners were captured, though many of these escaped during the ensuing darkness and confusion, whilst the Turkish rear-guard abandoned its position and retreated with wonderful rapidity throughout the night and following day. The final blunder was committed by the Navy, but though the consequences might have been most serious, the gallant sailors turned it into a brilliant success.

The banks of the river hide the view and only occasionally can one, when on a boat, obtain a vista of the country, and then only a distant one. Knowing that our troops had been sent on in pursuit, the gunboats pushed on at full steam round the huge bends, getting occasional glimpses of bodies of men moving in the

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direction of Baghdad. These were naturally mistaken for our own troops, and then suddenly the gunboats ran right into the Turkish position at Sheikh Jaad. They were received with heavy fire, from 5·9 howitzers, 4-inch guns, and indeed from every class of weapon, at point-blank range; many of the boats were hit by shells, their decks were swept by a hail of bullets and casualties were numerous. Retreat was impossible—besides, the word is not to be found in the naval dictionary—so opening a hot return fire with their guns, they pushed on and their gallantry was duly rewarded. Nearly all the Turkish shipping on the river fell into their hands, including H.M.S. *Firefly* (captured by the Turks during Townshend's retreat from Ctesiphon). Store ships, barges laden with wounded, river steamers, and much war material of every kind were captured, and the following day many hundreds of weary Turkish troops surrendered from the banks. I can only add to this story of the final blunder by saying, "Bravo! the Royal Navy!"

That evening a message from Crocker to Army Headquarters passed through me which said that, as he had not been able to water his horses all day, he was now retiring to Shumran for that purpose, and that *he had captured* 3,000 *sheep*.

On the 26th the 14th Division moved by the Baghdad road in pursuit of the enemy, but, though it made a very fine march considering how long the men had been engaged in trench warfare, the Turks are rapid movers and were well out of reach of infantry. The Cavalry Division came into contact with the Turkish rear-guard at Nahr Kellak, but generally speaking it was a day devoid of stirring incident. A brigade of the 13th Division followed the river bank, bivouacking

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that night at Baghailah. I also bivouacked there with my advanced Headquarters, and found a couple of gunboats tied up to the bank; they had been engaged in disposing of the numerous captures effected by the naval forces. I asked the senior officer how, with their small personnel, they had been able to capture so many prisoners, to which he replied, "I just sent the Doctor ashore with a couple of men to disarm them and take them in charge." So simple!

During the night we spent near Baghailah, about a dozen Arab thieves were caught in one of the camps, and, as severe examples have occasionally to be made, they were handed over to a British firing party so that their fate might serve as a warning.

On 27th February we reached Aziziyeh, where a halt was called for two very cogent reasons; the first being that General Maude had no authority to continue the advance on Baghdad and this had to be obtained from the Cabinet through the War Office; the second reason being that the sudden and rapid advance had taken George MacMunn by surprise. He was never told that the move was coming, no doubt wisely, and, conjurer though he was, he was not able to guarantee getting sufficient supplies up under five days. General Maude himself came forward, and the river steamer with his Headquarters on board drew into the bank opposite my bivouac and we were all bidden to dinner.

Maude was very pleased with the success of all his plans, and was now only anxious lest he should be forbidden to make any further advance when he knew Baghdad to be in his grasp. However, a favourable answer duly arrived in reply to his cable, so, the supply situation having been adjusted and the army closed up, we moved forward on the 5th March, the cavalry leading,

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followed by the IIIrd Corps. My Corps did an eighteen-mile march to Zeur, and on the way it was interesting to note the places where bodies of Turks had halted; from the debris I should say the troops had had no food except sheep, and these must have been eaten raw and the entire animal devoured, there being nothing left but skins and hoofs. Guns had been thrown into the river, but those I saw were not modern field pieces but guns of position, evidently brought from the defences of the Chataldja lines and difficult to move quickly. Evidences of hurried flight abounded, and the Arab marauders must have reaped a bountiful harvest during our halt at Aziziyeh.

Zeur contained no particular point of interest, except that there were evidences of numerous wild pig in the vicinity, but I fancy the country would have proved very unrideable, being full of holes caused, as in the case of black cotton soil in India, by chemical action.

The cavalry pushed on ahead and, during a heavy sandstorm, ran into the Turkish rear-guard at Lajj. The 13th Hussars, being suddenly fired on at very close range, were ordered by Richardson, their gallant C.O., to charge, and the Regiment rode right through the Turkish trench lines without sustaining many casualties.

The following day the order of march was the same. The IIIrd Corps reached Bustan, seventeen miles, whilst the cavalry, now under the command of Jones, went on through Ctesiphon to a point a few miles from the Dyalah River. On this march I remember seeing through the somewhat hazy atmosphere what I took to be a small black cloud on the horizon. When I remarked to someone that it was a very curious cloud, he replied that it would certainly be a curious cloud but that it happened to be the Ctesiphon Arch. As we approached

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closer, it became more defined and stood like a giant in its solitude, only the big arch of the banqueting hall left standing out of all the magnificent palaces of Chosroes, and even this stripped of all its marble overlay and only the inner lining of brick remaining. With all its magnificence of decoration gone, and the immense domed roof merely providing occasional shelter for the wandering Arab and his sheep from the rays of the scorching sun, it yet remains impressive and immense in its lonely setting on a vast and perfectly flat plain. Our bivouac was about a couple of miles from the Arch, so some of us walked over in the late afternoon to examine it more closely; but its charm and grandeur are enhanced by distance and closer inspection is disenchanting.

The Turks had prepared a rear-guard position here, but had evidently decided against any attempt to hold it and were now ensconced on the farther bank of the Dyalah River.

All through this march, from Baghailah onwards, there were more signs of cultivation, at least near the river, than we had been accustomed to see at or below Kut; we even got lettuces at the first-named place and ate them without ill effects. But the Arab is a poor cultivator and has received little or no encouragement in the past to develop the gifts of husbandry. The Bedouin (called Bedu in Mesopotamia), or wandering tribes of Arabs, despise cultivation, and for centuries have roamed vast tracts of country in search of grazing for their huge herds of camels, sheep, and horses. The riverine or cultivating Arab would certainly be despoiled by the Bedu of the produce garnered by the labour of his hands unless he was under protection, and then, under Turkish rule, though he might get some protection, a large moiety of his crops would be claimed by the Govern-

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ment; so there was no incentive to grow more than he required for himself and his family. This is not quite the case everywhere, because the Muntafik Arabs are both shepherds and cultivators, but then they are a powerful tribe, and were able not only to beat off raids but even to defy the Turkish tax-collectors.

We continued our march next day to Bawi in a thick dust-storm, the 13th Division leading, with O'Dowda's Brigade as advance guard, and O'Dowda's scouts, having reached the line of the Dyalah, found it strongly held by the enemy. The Turks on the left bank were soon driven across the river, but the right bank was evidently occupied in considerable force.

O'Dowda's main body halted some distance from the river, and he was ordered not to attempt to cross until after dark. When dusk fell, the sand-storm abated, and the light of a full moon made the prospects of forcing a passage of the river somewhat doubtful. Still it had to be tried, so pontoons were sent up, and an attempt was made to launch them. But the light on the water was too good and the enemy within too short a range; so, although some few pontoons, filled with volunteers, got as far as midstream, nothing could live under the hail of lead, which our covering fire utterly failed to lessen. Those pontoons which kept afloat drifted helplessly down into the Tigris filled with dead and wounded.

I ordered the attempt to be given up for the night and for emplacements to be made for guns and machine guns to cover a further attempt on the night of the 8th/9th of March, by which time I hoped to create a more favourable atmosphere. Thomson's Brigade of the 14th Division was ferried across the Tigris, to take up a position whence its guns could enfilade the enemy trenches on the Dyalah, and at daybreak on the 8th, Gunning (lately commanding

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36th Sikhs and who had been wounded during the fighting on the Hai), now commanding a brigade in the 14th Division vice Walton invalided, was dispatched up the Dyalah with a force of all arms and some pontoons, with orders to feel for a weak spot and cross whenever and wherever possible. Late in the afternoon I received a message from him to say that he had not been able to get near the river, and that his horses had been without water all day. I knew then that I had not realized how greatly his wound and the disaster to his beloved Regiment had affected him, and that I had selected the wrong leader; but it was too late to make a change, so I sent word to him to return to Bawi.

In the afternoon I had gone up to see O'Dowda in the midst of a bad dust-storm, and whilst on the way, a figure without a hat galloped wildly up, shouting "Bedu! look out for the Bedu!" I asked him what had happened, and from what he said gathered that, as an officer attached to the R.E., he had been on his way to the Dyalah with a mounted escort of the Corps Cavalry, when they were ambuscaded by Arabs and he thought the escort had all been killed. Whilst talking to him, I saw figures of men galloping towards us through the dust, so told my old orderly to get his rifle ready, upon which he said, "Achcha, Sahib, magr hamara Jewan hai" (Very good, sir, but they are our own men); and so they were and had brought the officer's hat along with them. I asked the Indian non-commissioned officer in charge of the escort whether he had seen any "Bedu," but he said no, only a few villagers walking down a water-cut carrying bundles of sticks. Well, one can sometimes make allowances for nerves, but this was too much, so I placed the officer under arrest, and he was afterwards tried by General Court Martial—and acquitted.

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TRANSPORT CROSSING THE RIVER DYALAH.

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O'Dowda had another try that night at two different points. One ferry managed to get some seventy men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment across the river, but was then shot to pieces. The other ferry was unable to work at all. O'Dowda proposed attempting to withdraw the men who had got across, but I said firmly, "No!" The party established itself in a loop of the river bank and there they held out for twenty-two hours, though they were being shot at from three sides. The party held its position and remained confident and cheery during the following day; they even exchanged badinage with their comrades on the opposite bank. However, the proposition was getting serious and I was puzzled how to deal with it; then Maude asked me if I thought I could do any good by utilizing two "Beetles," which he could place at my disposal, to work up the Tigris past the mouth of the Dyalah and land behind the enemy defences. I jumped at the offer. Lewin was selected to command this venture, and Maude sent two naval officers to navigate the flotilla. The result was both laughable and deplorable—after going about five hundred yards both "Beetles" stuck firmly in the mud.

O'Dowda worked out his own salvation and, after considerable artillery preparation, his infantry forced the crossing, though still heavily opposed, and drove the Turks from their positions. The sappers then threw a bridge over at the point where the Turkish bridge had been, and Cayley crossed with his Division (minus Lewin and his nautical force, who were still stuck in the mud and very much annoyed), deployed for attack, and drove the Turks from various points of vantage until he came up against the Tel Muhammed position covering Baghdad.

Meanwhile on the 8th Maude had thrown a bridge over the Tigris below Bawi, and on that day the Cavalry

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Division crossed, followed by the Ist Corps, and the whole moved on Baghdad railway station, which, after strenuous fighting for two days, they occupied very early on the morning of the 11th. The cavalry pushed on to occupy Khadaimain. About the same time Cayley, finding that the Turks had vacated Tel Muhammed, moved on to within a mile of the city. Under orders from General Maude the only force to be allowed to enter the city was Thomson's Brigade, but the American Consul, supported by Arab and Jewish notables, came out and begged Cayley to send troops in to restore order because, as they represented, the Kurds and Arabs, together with Turkish stragglers, were engaged in looting the city. Cayley therefore sent in the Herts Yeomanry Squadron and Andrus's Brigade in the interests of law and order, at the same time reporting the action he had taken.

Many units claim to have been first into Baghdad, and I dare say with equal accuracy. But the city lies on both sides of the Tigris, though the part on the left bank may, I suppose, be considered as Baghdad proper.

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CHAPTER XIV

PUSHING THE TURK NORTHWARDS

I HAVE compiled a bald narrative of those events in the fighting which eventually led to the capture of Baghdad, in so far as they concerned me personally, but I have only incidentally mentioned the great soldier to whose powers of organization, strategical and tactical genius, this triumph of British arms was due.

In previous chapters I have narrated my personal experiences, which were naturally bound up in those of the various formations which I had the honour to command in three other theatres of war, and during this narration I have permitted myself a certain amount of criticism with which the reader may or may not agree. In this campaign, though in one or two minor instances I may have differed from General Maude, I have no criticisms to offer; indeed I have nothing but unstinted admiration for his brilliant conduct of the operations.

I am diffident of an attempt to produce a pen portrait that will do justice to the conqueror of Baghdad, so will confine myself to jotting down my own impressions.

A tall, good-looking man of athletic build, with an open and frank expression and a kindly smile; the possessor of a good (almost iron) constitution, which he deemed it his duty as a soldier to maintain by moderation in all things as well as by physical exercise; single-minded in his devotion to duty; deeply and sincerely religious, without being in any respect narrow; an early riser and an inordinately quick and hard worker;

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an ardent student of his profession, he had perfected himself in his knowledge of the details of the various branches of staff work; the possessor of both physical and moral courage of a high order, he never got rattled when things went temporarily wrong; unselfish and generous in the credit he gave to the subordinates who had merely carried out to the best of their abilities his wishes and ideas; always and deeply concerned for the welfare of all under his command; in fact (highest praise of all), the finest type of British officer and gentleman. Small wonder that he was respected and beloved throughout his army, from Corps Commanders to British private soldiers and Indian sepoys, or that under his leadership that army, from being the Cinderella amongst British forces, had become famous and ever-victorious.

Had he no faults? Well, yes, he had. The kindly smile was not deceptive, it was the index to his nature, and though I do not think he suffered fools gladly, he did suffer them longer than most men in his position would have done. By this I mean that he was not sufficiently ruthless in the elimination of the unfit.

Then, again, he centralized too much, and yet, though he went too deeply into detail, he was the *rara avis* who could do this and keep his mind clear for the big things. In his case the close proximity of the trees did not obscure the forest.

Luck had been on our side throughout the campaign, and even those events which seemed at the time to be unfortunate, often turned out to be blessings in disguise; for instance, the premature rise of the Tigris in the middle of February—an almost unprecedented event which at the moment one thought unlucky—turned out to be the best thing that could have happened from our point

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of view. It confirmed the enemy in his opinion that we should not be able to force a crossing. As we advanced north of Kut, the high river enabled, first of all our naval gunboats to push up the river at their utmost speed without, as in a low river, intricate navigation, whilst it also considerably assisted the supply situation both during the advance to, and subsequent occupation of, Baghdad itself, as well as the further operations beyond that city. Then again, as a result of the February rise, the flood which occurred at the normal time, late March and in April, was much lower than is usual. Had the April rise been a normal one, the Turks would have undoubtedly cut the bunds north of Baghdad, and the consequent inundations would have impeded, if not entirely stopped, any operations northward until the hot weather came upon us. Even as things were, the Turks on the Euphrates cut the Saklawiyeh dam and flooded all the country west of Baghdad.

Cobbe and I had now changed our respective positions, and whilst his Corps operated on the right, mine was on the left bank of the Tigris, so that we became on these two flanks respectively responsible for safeguarding the approaches to the city. The 13th Division advanced to the north-east of Baghdad and bivouacked in the neighbourhood of Muadhem, whilst the 14th Division bivouacked at Hinaidie (less Thomson's Brigade which had relieved Andrus in charge of the city itself).

Maude made an unassuming entry into Baghdad by river on the evening of the 11th, and his ship drew up and anchored opposite the British Residency—a Turkish hospital at the time, but destined later to become the offices of General Headquarters.

On the morning of the 12th I went to report myself, and asked permission to take up my residence in the late

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German Consulate; this was granted and my staff and I moved in there that afternoon. The Consulate was not a detached building, but one of a row of houses on the bank of the river, about half a mile down-stream of the British Residency, one of which had been occupied by von der Goltz and afterwards became the residence of the Army Commander. The view from the windows overlooking the river was picturesque, and in the evening, as the sun sank beneath the horizon, the date palms, backed by the after-glow, softened in outline and became beautiful. But gone are all the glories of the Baghdad of the Caliphs. The present city is merely a drab huddle of Eastern houses with a number of blue-domed mosques to give a little colour to the scene. Flood, fire, sword, and destruction have visited Haroun-al-Raschid's city on numerous occasions, and only a small portion of the Citadel and one minaret, almost tottering to its doom, remain as slight mementoes of its one-time stately edifices.

As might be expected of an Eastern city, sanitation did not exist in our sense of the word, and the Turks had made no effort to improve matters except that, regardless of encroachments on mosques or private property, they had for their own convenience driven a road straight through the city from the south to the north gates. For this we were duly grateful, because it would have been difficult for us to carry out such a project in view of religious prejudices. This street, which had been christened Khalil Street, but was perhaps better known as New Street, was not a very finished product as regards its surface; it had no metalling, and the stumps of palm trees left in it were somewhat disconcerting to the springs of a motor-car.

Maude issued proclamations to the inhabitants in which he assured them that we had come as friends

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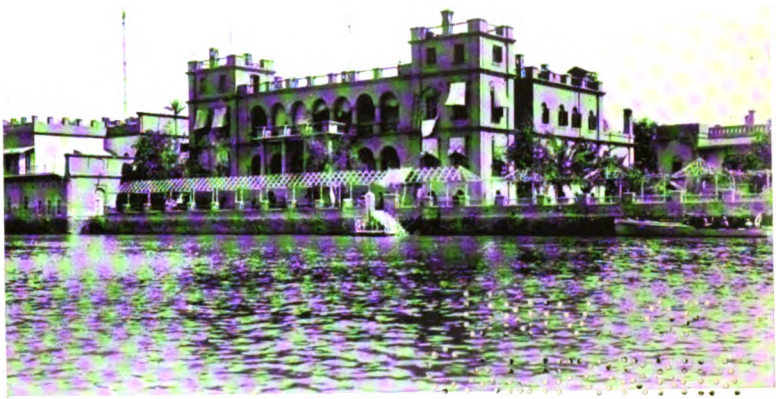
ENTRY OF BRITISH TROOPS INTO BAGHDAD,
11TH MARCH, 1917



THE BRITISH RESIDENCY AT BAGHDAD, MADE USE OF FOR OFFICES OF G.H.Q.

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and not as conquerers, that all their holy places would be protected, their religious festivals honoured by us in the same manner as by the Turks, and that life and property would be safeguarded.

Measures for effective sanitation were at once initiated, as well as for a properly organized water-supply; a bridge was thrown over the Tigris to connect the eastern and western portions of the city. In fact Maude's genius for organization had full scope, and he not only initiated every scheme, but went fully into the details of each one himself. Notwithstanding all his pre-occupations of a semi-civil nature, the thought uppermost in his mind was finally to destroy the Turkish Army, or at least drive it out of the Delta and so prevent the embankments or bunds or the river from being cut prior to the anticipated high river in April.

Cobbe dispatched the 7th Division, under Fane, up the right bank to attack the Turks who had taken up a position at Mushaidie, and, after a stiff fight, the enemy was defeated and retired rapidly on Beled. Cayley, with his 13th Division, moved up beyond Yahudie on the left bank, drove back small Turkish forces and eventually reached Sindiyeh (whence the Turks had some time before started to lay a light railway to bring coal from a mine at Kifri). A small mixed force was sent from the 14th Division to occupy Baqubah on the Dyalah River, but its commander lacked enterprise, and, finding that place in occupation of the Turks, made no attempt to cross the river.

Maude was most anxious to open up communications with the Russian Army in Persia and induce its Commander to push down and join hands with us on the Dyalah, so he sent up a brigade of the 3rd Division under Edwards to capture Baqubah, bridge the river,

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and open the road for a cavalry force. Edwards soon forced the passage, captured Baqubah as well as a few Turks, and occupied the town and its approaches. Other portions of the 3rd Division seized and occupied Felujah on the Euphrates (this is the place where Noah is locally and popularly said to have prepared the Ark), to which a light railway ran from Baghdad.

In view of my forebodings with regard to Gunning's health, I now thought it well to place his Brigade in charge of Baghdad, and so release Thomson for more active work. Thomson then moved up to Deltawah. The cavalry reconnoitring beyond Baqubah reported the enemy to be holding a strong position on the Jebel Hamrin, thus intervening between ourselves and the Russians, so Maude dispatched the whole of the 3rd Division under Keary to attack and clear the Turks from the left bank of the Dyalah. The enemy was in strength, and the position he was holding naturally strong as well as intricate. What exactly happened I never knew, but the attack failed and our casualties were severe.

Here I digress a little from the sequence of events to demonstrate how prices began to rise shortly after the advent of the British Army into Baghdad. Baqubah is noted for its delicious oranges, and when we first went into Baghdad, small Arab boys were running about with four oranges in their hands, shouting, "Ek anna, Ek anna!" (one penny, one penny), but at the end of a few days the hands contained only one orange, and the cry had changed to "Char annas, Char annas!" (fourpence, fourpence). In the same way, when we first entered Baqubah, Neilson, who was running our Headquarters Mess, bought turkeys at three rupees each (about four shillings), but before the following Christmas these birds had risen in price to five pounds!

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After we had reached Baghdad, the Turkish 2nd Division, which was holding the passes in Persia against the Russians, retired through Kasr-i-Shirin and eventually to the line of the Dyalah, where it was joined by the 14th Division, which latter had originally checked our advance at the Dyalah and then retreated northward through Baqubah. These two divisions had now come under the command of Ali Ihsan Beg (whom our men christened "Old Sandbag"). Ali Ihsan's plan was evidently to join up with the Turkish divisions on the Tigris, and to that end he moved under cover of the Jebel Hamrin, and crossing that range of hills, drove our cavalry out of Deli Abbas preparatory to an advance via the Khalis Canal on Deltawah, whilst at the same time a Turkish force on the Tigris left bank moved across the Adhaim River and entrenched itself near Dogameh. This latter force was promptly attacked by Cayley with the 13th Division, and after a severe fight, driven back to the Adhaim. Thomson's Brigade, with part of Carey's Brigade of the 14th Division, was entrenched in a position covering Deltawah, supported by the Divisional Artillery.

The forces under my command on the left bank of the Tigris were now getting beyond my control if I remained in Baghdad, so taking a small staff consisting of Fraser, Capper, Hemsley, and Carter, we went up the river in a motor-launch to Sindiyeh in order to be nearer the scene of future operations. I left Egerton to act for me in direct administrative command of the IIIrd Corps and also on the Dyalah line at and beyond Baqubah.

The navigation of the river north of Baghdad is very intricate, and, indeed, is not very feasible in low water; but the river was now in flood, and, though we had no pilot, we managed to keep to the deep channel by means of a somewhat curious method which I will explain. At this

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time of the year (April), when the river is in heavy spate, vast numbers of snow-flies (not unlike our own may-fly) cover the stream, but lie thickest over the deep channel, so that by following the line of the most numerous flies we never ran aground, though often the course took us almost in a straight line from one bank to the other.

We duly arrived at Sindiyeh the same day, where we found the 13th Division in bivouac, with an outpost line watching in the direction of the Adhaim. They reported thefts of rifles and other things by local Arabs, so I took the law into my own hands and arrested two of the head men (sheiks) of the neighbouring villages. I issued an ultimatum to them, viz. that either the stolen goods should be returned at once, or that I would fine them each Rs. 2,000, in default of payment of which I would burn and destroy their villages. The stolen goods were delivered up the following day, and there were no more thefts in this particular vicinity.

After a short stay at Sindiyeh, I moved on with the 13th Division to the neighbourhood of the Adhaim, our advance guard driving a few parties of Turks across the river, and there we ran into the worst plague of locusts I had ever seen. They were at the hopping stage and spread over miles of country, leaving a desolate track in their wake. They devoured everything, the dead bodies of their kind, horse-dung, refuse of any kind or description; they even tried to eat us—at least they bit one very hard. Arabs by the river bank were hurriedly cutting their half-ripe corn to save a little from the voracious horde, but the locusts were devouring it quicker than they could cut it and I should think very little was rescued.

The Turkish position lay on the far bank of the Adhaim River with, as usual, the right resting on the Tigris and the left thrown far back. The ancient bed of

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MESSAGES, SIGNALS AND FIELD TELEGRAPHS. No. of Message 1323

Army Form C 2121. *Modified for India.*

Received	Sent	Prefix	Code	No. of words.
At 7/33 m.	At m.	Office of Origin and Service Instructions. London post office	1 m.	31 33
From G H Q	To			Station Call
By MC 11	By	nr 10		Date

To — See instructions on cover. Commanderinchief british Force Exptdy bagdad

Sender's Number. Day of month. In reply to number.

In	the	midst	
AAA	of	the	great struggle
in	western	europe	I
wish	to	assure	you
that	I	follow	with
Constant	interest	the	splendid
Progress	made	by	the
gallant	troops	under	your
Command	I	congratulate	
you	and	all	ranks
on	the	success	of
your	latest	achievements	

From — George R I

Place

Time

May be forwarded as now corrected. Signature of Addressor or person authorised to telegraph. Class of message.

Cypher. Words. Sent

How received.

BAGDAD APR 18 G.S.

Lal Chand & Sons, Calcutta.—No. 6192 Army C—[illegible] 4,74,000 Blks.

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the Nahrwan Canal, the big distributing canal of Nebuchadnezzar's day which took off from above the head of the delta when Nimrud's great barrage was in existence, ran through their position. This canal must in ancient days have crossed the bed of the Adhaim by an aqueduct a mile long, because the continuation of it was on our side. A wonderful piece of engineering it must have been, as broad as the Suez Canal it ran for very many miles, crossing both the Adhaim and the Dyalah, but now its final remains are gradually petering out into nothingness.

The Cavalry Division, now very weak in numbers, was slowly falling back in front of the Turks towards Deltawah, where Thomson and his force were entrenched; and we had hardly sufficiently reconnoitred the Adhaim position, when an urgent message arrived from General Maude ordering me to send Cayley and the 13th Division (less one brigade to contain the Turkish force on the Adhaim) by a night march to intercept and drive back the advancing Turks. I put in a plea for twenty-four hours' delay, so that the Turkish force might get engaged with Thomson and allow us to come in behind it, but this was not granted, whether rightly or wrongly I do not know—but I think the latter.

In addition to the two squadrons of Corps Cavalry I had also a squadron of Herts Yeomanry and the 21st Cavalry, so, at Fraser's instance, I had sent a message to Egerton to ask him to send me Cassels (G.S.O.1, 14th Division) to take command of this mounted force. O'Dowda's Brigade, together with a battery of artillery, was left to watch the line of the Adhaim, and Cayley was placed in command of the force destined for the night march, Cassels's Cavalry, the 13th Divisional Artillery (less one battery), one 60-pounder battery (horse-drawn), Andrus's and Lewin's Infantry Brigades.

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The night march went off admirably, and at daybreak Cayley ran into the Turkish force also on the move, but—alas for that twenty-four hours!—our advance guard struck the head and not the flank or rear of the enemy. A sharp fight occurred, in which Lewin's quickness helped very materially, and the Turks slowly drew off and retired. Cayley followed up until dusk, employing Cassels to protect his flanks, and our guns, especially the 60-pounders, did considerable execution.

I had ridden over in the early morning, but by the time I arrived on the scene the enemy was retreating. Cayley tried to keep touch that night, but by next morning the enemy had succeeded in withdrawing into the Jebel Hamrin where I was not prepared to follow. Leaving Cayley with the Infantry Brigades to watch the Khalis Canal against any further attempt on the part of the Turks to venture again down that line, and leaving him also the 14th Divisional Artillery and the 60-pounder battery, I took Cassels's Cavalry and 13th Divisional Artillery back to O'Dowda on the Adhaim, to which rendezvous I also ordered Thomson to march with his Brigade.

O'Dowda had by this time carried out a thorough reconnaissance of the position and, after consultation with him, I drew out the plan of attack. What I had to do was simple—to persuade the enemy that I intended to cross beyond his left and attack by an outflanking movement—and this was easy because he would expect me to do so. In pursuance of the scheme, I sent Cassels up the river the following day with orders to make pretences at attempts to cross, but to work timidly and retire at once from the river line when fired on. My real plan was to cut through between the enemy and the Tigris and, as the weather was now getting very hot, drive him away from water.

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JEBEL HAMARIN, SHOWING PACK TRANSPORT ON THE MOVE.

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That night O'Dowda had his covering parties ready with the necessary pontoons for the ferries, and before daylight on the following day most of his Brigade were across and formed up in the dead ground under the cliffs. One crossing was a bogus one, to keep the enemy on the *qui vive* on his left, and, to heighten this delusion of the real attack coming round this flank, Cassels again went up-stream before daybreak, this time with orders to act with more boldness but not to cross. O'Dowda's men all carried bits of tin (Gallipoli) to indicate their positions to the artillery.

As soon as it was light enough, the artillery started to register, and about 8 a.m. the gunners put down a barrage, under cover of which the infantry gained a position on the top of the cliffs amongst the broken ground. When they had indicated their positions to the gunners, the guns put down another heavy barrage and the infantry made their attack against the enemy first-line trenches, which was immediately successful. Thomson's Brigade crossed in support, and the sappers started work on the bridge, Cassels's cavalry force having been withdrawn to water and feed his horses.

Unfortunately the bridge took much longer than was anticipated, owing to a quicksand near the farther bank which had to be solidified with brushwood, so that the next barrage and full attack by both Brigades broke the enemy's defences before the bridge was ready for the cavalry.

Commanders Sherbrooke and Buxton, R.N., with their gunboats (H.M.S. *Mantis* and another of the *Insect* class), who had joined us, were on the Tigris close at hand and very anxious to take part in the fray. After their experience at Sheikh Jaad, to which I have referred, they neither of them appreciated the idea of pushing up the

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Tigris past the hostile position, particularly as the river was not easily navigable, so that one could only utilize their guns from their position on the Tigris, which was down-stream of the mouth of the Adhaim. These being of little use against trenches, I asked them to keep the course of the Nahrwan Canal under fire, and when the infantry had broken the enemy line and the Turks were in full retreat, the naval guns followed the bed of the canal by continually lengthening their range and fuse.

Cassels meanwhile had been dancing with impatience, and when at last the bridge was complete and I said to him, "Now you can go; pursue as far as the outskirts of Samarra and keep between the enemy and the river," he was off as hard as he could go. He returned that evening at dusk, having captured over 900 prisoners and all their machine guns, complete with mules and equipment, but to his chagrin the enemy guns got clean away.

I have gone somewhat into detail because this little fight was just like a set-piece at a field-day in its various stages.

(1) Misleading the enemy as to intentions.
(2) A night advance, including the crossing of a river.
(3) Artillery co-operation to allow infantry to gain a position of readiness.
(4) Intercommunication between infantry and artillery.
(5) Co-operation of artillery and infantry in first stage of attack.
(6) Ditto in second stage and breaking of enemy line.
(7) R.E. employed in their proper functions, viz., opening up communications.

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(8) Cavalry parallel pursuit of demoralized enemy.
(9) Destruction of hostile force.
(10) Clearing of battlefield by specially detailed parties.
(11) Dressing-stations pushed forward and stretcher-bearers collecting wounded.
(12) Severely wounded removed to Field Ambulance and later transferred to river steamer to be sent down river to hospital.
(13) Burial of dead.

Everything complete. Our total bag was something over 1,400 prisoners, the only fly in the ointment being the escape of the hostile guns due to the delay caused by the unexpected quicksand. Maude sent hearty congratulations, and in writing to thank him I said I thought that the ideal cavalry leader had been found in Cassels.

Fane had been advancing up the right bank of the Tigris and had defeated the enemy on several occasions, driving him back until he finally took up a position at Istabulat, covering the then terminus of the German-engineered Baghdad Railway. Cobbe had now gone up to the front with the 3rd Division, taken direct command there of his whole Corps, and was preparing to attack the Istabulat position. I naturally expected to be asked to co-operate from the left bank, but the only order I received was to send Cassels with his cavalry force to join Cobbe; still I had a reconnaissance made for the purpose of selecting artillery positions on the Turkish flank at Istabulat.

Cobbe attacked the enemy position, and after a fierce fight which lasted from daybreak to dark the Turks still held most of their ground. That night he informed me that he proposed to renew the attack the following day, and added that he would be very glad of any

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assistance I could give him from the left bank. I at once dispatched Thomson in command of his own Brigade, and nearly all the 13th Divisional Artillery with Peck as C.R.A., to the position previously selected. The following day Cobbe renewed the attack, which proved completely successful, many prisoners (about 650) were taken, and all the locomotives and rolling-stock of the railway fell into our hands. The enemy dead were numerous, and Peck told me later that, in so far as his guns were concerned, the day had been a gunner's paradise. I believe the enemy casualties were well over 3,000, mostly caused by Peck's artillery.

But that afternoon (23rd April) an urgent message came to me from Maude saying that he had definite information that Ali Ihsan was moving down the Adhaim with his divisions in echelon, the 14th leading, and that I was to march that night, attack them in detail and destroy them.

This was rather a poser. The only force I had with me was O'Dowda's Brigade (now about 1,200 strong) and some 350 cavalry (13th and 14th Lancers) sent to me from the Cavalry Division, while most of the artillery was with Thomson. An aeroplane reconnaissance sent out that evening reported the leading Turkish troops to be entrenched about twelve miles up-stream on the right bank of the Adhaim; whilst about 1,200 yards from their position and on our side of it, the observer reported a big and broad nullah running down to the river.

This seemed to offer a good point of concentration. Orders were, therefore, sent to Thomson to march by compass bearing on this nullah, so as to arrive there before daybreak, and, knowing that he would probably have many men not fit to march, the whole of our supply-

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train (some 200 Ford vans) was dispatched to help him to get there in time. Orders were also sent to Cayley to send Lewin's Brigade, and as much of the 14th Divisional Artillery as he could spare from Deltawah, to join me as early as possible the following day at a point on the Adhaim some five miles up-stream of the advanced enemy position. About 9 p.m. that day (23rd) I started off, with O'Dowda's Brigade; Fraser, O'Dowda, Hemsley, Carter, and myself walking at the head of the main body of the advance guard. As time went on and daybreak was near at hand, I calculated that we ought to have reached the nullah described and sketched by the observer, but there were no signs of it. Then at the first glimmer of dawn machine-gun fire opened, and in the dim light we saw figures running about on some mounds. We had marched right into the enemy's position.

My staff and I gracefully and hurriedly withdrew; O'Dowda extended his men, who lay down and opened fire, and there was no sign of Thomson. O'Dowda wanted to attack at once, but was ordered to wait, and then—welcome sight! and about half an hour late—we saw the dust of Thomson's column coming up on the flank of the Turkish position; the Turks also saw it, and when O'Dowda attacked with great determination, the enemy put up a poor fight and hurriedly withdrew up the bed of the Adhaim. None of the infantry were capable of taking up the pursuit, so I sent on the cavalry with a R.H.A. battery (13-pounders) to inflict as much damage as possible. Having reorganized the reunited force, I moved on about five miles to await Lewin and Mackay (C.R.A., 14th Division), who joined us that evening after a long and strenuous march. That evening Mackenzie (13th Lancers), who was in command of the cavalry, told me that one of his senior Indian officers,

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who had followed the enemy up the bed of the Adhaim, had reported seeing large numbers of dead Turks in the river bed, victims of the R.H.A. guns. But an officer's patrol sent to verify this information found only about a dozen. This fully confirmed my opinion of the 13-pounder being an ineffective weapon.

The united Turkish force was next day discovered to be holding an entrenched position on both banks of the river, near what was locally called Band-i-Adhaim (the gate of the Adhaim) and not far from the foot-hills of the Jebel Hamrin. The information at my disposal was that the enemy strength was about 6,500 men with two batteries of 5.9 howitzers and three or four batteries of 4-inch guns, and my total force was not much more than 4,000 of all arms. I marched slowly on up the river, covered by the meagre force of cavalry, with Thomson and O'Dowda on the right bank and Lewin on the left, making short marches to give the infantry an easy time after their late strenuous marches in the great heat which now prevailed. I should have said before that the bed of the Adhaim is very wide, over a mile in places, with very steep and lofty banks; though, except after a spate, the actual stream is insignificant and, except near the mouth, not more than 40 feet in width. There is much scrub growing in the bed of the river, the resort of wild pig and black partridge, whilst sisi (small red-legged partridges) abound in the broken ground on the top of the cliffs, so Carter and I did some shooting on the way up, though I do not think that the bag was a big one. The water of the river is impregnated with saltpetre, so that it was not very thirst-quenching; even the horses felt this, and it had deleterious effects on the Indian troops, though curiously enough not on the British.

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On the 29th we came in contact with the Turks, who appeared to be holding strong positions, the approaches to which were over dead flat ground, and, owing to their numerical superiority, our attack to be successful must be in the nature of a surprise. Eventually, having pushed forward far enough on the right bank to get my artillery in position to dominate the left one and within effective range of the enemy's position on that bank, we made a great display of strength on the right bank. Then, as soon as it was dark on the 30th, O'Dowda's Brigade crossed over and got into position on the right, to the east of Lewin, the cavalry also crossing to the same side. Thomson's Brigade made an advance by night to within effective range of the enemy on the right bank and entrenched itself.

The real attack was to take place on the left bank at daybreak on the 1st May, and if successful would effectually cut the Turkish line of retreat, via Abu Ghuraib through the Jebel Hamrin. Limited objectives were allotted to Lewin and O'Dowda, the artillery had registered, all was ready and the result in the lap of the gods.

At daybreak the guns put down their barrage, then Lewin and O'Dowda attacked and immediately gained their objectives, Lewin reporting the capture of some 600 prisoners. But (as I have remarked before, there nearly always seems to be a BUT) Lewin's men, seeing the enemy on the run and two batteries of artillery within their grasp, dashed beyond their objective. Then about 7 a.m. arose the worst dust-storm I ever remember and the fog of war descended with a vengeance. Our artillery was blanketed, first by the uncertainty as to the whereabouts of the two leading battalions of Lewin's Brigade, and then by the impossibility of seeing more than twenty yards through the blinding dust.

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What really happened we only heard afterwards. The two battalions captured the enemy guns, and then the Turkish force from the right bank crossed over and took them in flank; in the raging dust-storm a hand-to-hand fight took place, but the enemy outnumbered our men by six to one and the result could never have been in doubt. One hundred and fifty of our men were captured and a number killed, though they had accounted for just as many Turks. The guns they had so gallantly taken were recaptured, and Ali Ihsan, covering his retirement with a strong rear-guard, made good his retreat into the mazes of the Jebel Hamrin.

After the cruel bad luck of the dust-storm, which cleared off about noon, but had robbed us of complete victory, I was not sorry to see him go.

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CHAPTER XV

BAGHDAD: THE DEATH OF MAUDE

WHAT depressed me more than the loss of a complete victory which the troops had so well deserved, was the fact that Lewin's Brigade, which under his able leadership had been uniformly successful in every engagement in which it had taken part, should have finally met with this rebuff, and more especially that the enemy had taken prisoners from it. However, as Lewin almost cheerfully said, "Complete success is not always possible," and at least we had driven a superior Turkish force out of a strong position and caused it to retreat. Also I cannot help thinking it was fortunate for us that Ali Ihsan prided himself on his conduct of retirements. Had attack been his pet *métier* and had he thrown his numerically superior force against us during the dust-storm, when the wind was blowing in our faces, I tremble to think of what might have happened. With my weak force I had had to gamble, and put the whole force into the attack, thus leaving myself with no reserves, and my superior gun power would have been useless.

The cavalry followed up the Turkish rear-guard as it drew off towards the Pass in the Jebel Hamrin and secured a few prisoners, and the infantry was reorganized in a defensive position in case Ali Ihsan changed his mind. The dead were buried and the battlefield cleared. The following morning it was found that during the night Arabs had disinterred some of the dead (a pleasant

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habit of theirs) and stripped them of all clothing, so we laid some traps for them with Mills grenades. These worked well and, on the morning of the day we started on our return march, four dead Arabs were found in the burial ground. I hope that this proved a salutary lesson and prevented further intended desecrations.

We began our return march down the Adhaim on 3rd May and, leaving Thomson in position near the mouth, Lewin and O'Dowda returned to Deltawah to rejoin Cayley, as also did the 13th Divisional Artillery. Mackenzie with his cavalry rejoined his Division. The 14th Divisional Artillery, escorted by two battalions of Cary's Brigade, returned to Baghdad and thence moved to Baqubah, to which place Egerton had transferred his Headquarters. My staff and I returned to Baghdad and reoccupied the German Consulate.

The weather was now very hot; indeed, for the past fortnight the troops had been marching and fighting in a temperature of 110 degrees in the shade. Sand-flies, those invisible pests of Mesopotamia, had been particularly trying in the neighbourhood of the Adhaim, where the broken ground seems to breed them in great numbers, and sand-fly fever had claimed many victims. I have not mentioned the difficulties of the supply situation during the extended operations north and north-east of Baghdad. Suffice it to say that Capper, ably assisted by Brownrigg and his supply officer, and thanks to the invaluable Ford van, had overcome every difficulty. Willoughby, at Headquarters, had arranged for the necessary supplies and munitions, and Fitz-williams had established forward bases near the mouth of the Adhaim and at Sindiyeh by means of river transport, so we never ran short.

After five months of continuous operations most of

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us were glad of a comparatively quiet time, but Maude remained as strenuous, and his hours of work as long, as ever. His sole recreation was his evening ride, and even that was a tour of inspection of something different each day, whilst his Sundays were devoted to visiting the various hospitals.

Maude's dispatch up to and covering the capture of Baghdad had come out, and I had been rewarded by being created K.C.B. In this dispatch his references to my services were so flattering that I am not sure that I ought to quote them here.

"Lieut.-General W. R. Marshall, K.C.B., has commanded his troops with determination and judgment. His quiet imperturbable manner, his coolness and decision, inspire confidence among his subordinates, whilst his bold methods and intelligent appreciation and rapid execution of orders have been of the greatest value."

I need hardly say that I am very proud of these words written by one of the very few outstanding soldiers produced by any country during the world-war.

The late German Consul had evidently departed in a hurry, having left most of his personal belongings behind, so we had these collected and handed over to Sir Percy Cox, though we did keep a few books, amongst them being Miss Gertrude Bell's *Amurath to Amurath*, and two books on Persian rugs, of which we became enthusiastic and ignorant purchasers. However, we learnedly discussed knots, stitches, designs, and dyes, and by the aid of the coloured plates in the German books, attained a superficial knowledge of the subject. Anyhow it was an interest during a dull time.

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Maude told me confidentially that it was on the cards that he might be sent to Egypt to replace Sir A. Murray, but it was not until after his death that I knew he had strongly recommended me as his successor. Sir William Robertson in a cable had discussed various names of officers to succeed Maude, in case it was eventually decided to send him to Egypt, and at the end had said, " I have not mentioned Marshall as I do not know him and he has no staff experience." To this Maude had replied that in his considered opinion I was the most fitted to succeed to the command; that, as a fighting soldier, I left nothing to be desired and that, with a good staff, he was sure I would do well. I have put this in here because it will be explanatory of what happened later.

Rumours, or I should say secret information, pointed to an attempt by a Turko-German Army, led by Mackensen or Falkenhayn and entitled the " Yilderim Army," to drive us out of Baghdad. In discussing it with Maude I hazarded the conjecture that the Euphrates line would be its most probable line of advance, but he held to the view that its point of concentration would be Mosul and its advance would be made through the fertile country east of that town and via Kirkuk to Baqubah, by which route local supplies would be obtainable.

Various Russian Generals had come down to see Maude, but, though I fancy they made flowery plans and promises, nothing came of them, and their troops remained in Persia doing nothing except live on a country which could ill provide for their needs.

During this period Cobbe had taken over the Tigris line, so Thomson had rejoined the 14th Division. The IIIrd Corps was now disposed to watch and hold the various lines of waterway by which a hostile force

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could advance from the Kirkuk direction, from Beled Ruz on the extreme right (east) to Sindiyeh on the left. This line ran athwart the Dyalah River and the various canals which run south after taking off from it at the gorge of the Jebel Hamrin, the Ruz—Mahrut—Muradiyeh and Khalis Canals. The 13th Division had its Headquarters and strongest concentration and defence near Deltawah, and the 14th Division at Baqubah. Cobbe prepared two lines of defence on the Tigris line at Samarra and Beled.

Brooking, with the 15th Division, was brought up from Nasariyeh (the Muntafik Arabs no longer being a menace) and sent to hold the Euphrates line with Headquarters at Felujah. Before his arrival an attempt had been made to drive the enemy farther up the Euphrates by attacking his position at Ramadie, but it had failed, largely owing to the intense heat. Felujah was already connected with Baghdad by a narrow-gauge railway. The broad-gauge German railway ran as far as Samarra, or rather Istabulat. The narrow-gauge line, which had been so useful during the operations on the Hai, had been pulled up and sent to Baghdad to be relaid as far as Baqubah, and now a metre gauge was laid to connect Kut with Baghdad as a shorter and alternative line of supply to the Tigris (the distance by rail being about ninety-six and by river about 225 miles). Maude's interior communications thus became enormously improved and, by whatever line the Yilderim Army might elect to come, he would be able rapidly to concentrate the majority of his force to oppose it.

Percy Cox was most anxious to bring all the country behind our army under political control, and wished General Maude to garrison the line of the Euphrates from Felujah to Nasariyeh. For this view there was

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a good deal of justification, but Maude, with perhaps greater justification so long as the Yilderim idea held the field, refused to accede to Cox's representations on the ground that it was contrary to military expediency to scatter his available strength more than was absolutely necessary. They were both right, and they were both strong men intent on having their own way, so that there was some rift in the lute.

The heat in July became almost unbearable, the temperature during the first fortnight averaging 125 degrees in the shade, and in spite of all precautions the hospitals became over-crowded with heat-stroke cases. But the nurses, though presumably feeling the heat to an equal extent, worked indomitably in their care of the sufferers. Many cases were fatal, especially amongst the older men, their temperatures rising to 110 degrees, which, if not quickly reduced, meant failure of heart and death.

Maude asked me to form a good camp for convalescents in order to save the men of the IIIrd Corps from being sent down-river; so I selected a site at the Hinaidie bend, practically a peninsula, where the river would bring cool breezes, and, as it was intended primarily for men recovering from heat-stroke, I directed my Chief Engineer (Johnson) to build huts with good roofs and floors sunk some three feet below the surface of the ground. Stanley, the Red Cross Commissioner, volunteered to provide interior comforts, and the camp was soon a going concern. However, it appeared that I had greatly exceeded the wishes of the Army Commander and, on one of his flying visits of inspection down the river in a *glisseur* (a motor raft capable of great speed), he noticed my almost luxurious camp. The next item on the programme was an official letter from Knox

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(D.Q.M.G.) asking by whose authority I had expended the money on the buildings, and referring me to some Indian Army Regulation which laid down that a Corps Commander was not allowed to expend more than five rupees or some such-like sum without reference to higher authority. In my reply I said that I was glad to say I did not know many of the Indian Army Regulations, but that the deed was now done and I thought the cost of sending men down-river, and probably to India to recover, would far exceed my modest expenditure. As a matter of fact this hutted camp later became the pleasantest hospital in or near Baghdad.

Maude also asked me to select a site for a gymkhana or Sporting Club and, after looking round, I pitched on a likely spot to the north of the city and took him out there to see the ground, of which he approved. As one cannot produce polo, cricket, football, hockey, and tennis grounds, as well as a club-house and race-course, out of one's hat, I suggested the provision of funds for the purpose, and as a start asked for 10,000 rupees. He said that that was beyond any funds at his disposal; so I asked if he would mind my trying to raise the money from that generous provider of funds for all good purposes, viz. the Western India Turf Club. On his agreeing, I cabled to K. O. Goldie (my assistant Military Secretary), then on leave in Poona, asking him to approach the committee of the W.I.T.C. for a loan, or preferably a gift, of 20,000 rupees, of course explaining the purpose for which it was needed. Goldie, who was staying at Government House, showed the cable to Lady Willingdon; she at once placed Rs. 20,000 to our credit out of funds at her own disposal, then had the principal members of the Turf Club Committee asked to dinner and got a promise of another 20,000 from them. Thanks

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to our fairy-godmother, the Club made a good start, and Carter took the organization of it in hand with such drive and zeal that it was soon a going concern, and, in addition to the grounds and games already mentioned, we laid out a golf course. An old but solidly constructed octroi post was transformed into a club-house; water was brought from the Tigris by means of a pumping station, and specially constructed aqueducts took it to the club-house, as well as to the various grounds. These were all levelled and marked out, including three polo-grounds and a race-course.

But even Lady Willingdon's funds were soon exhausted and, pending the time when I hoped to make racing pay for the upkeep, I got permission to send round a circular to ask all officers in the force north of Kut whether they were willing to give one day's pay. The response was generous and almost unanimous, Captain Sassoon of the 13th Hussars even being good enough to send a cheque for 1,000 rupees, though he desired the gift to remain anonymous. Carter was a most able organizer and, though we got others to act as honorary secretaries for the various games, the bulk of the work fell on him. Of course we got a great deal of the labour done for nothing, and especially were we indebted to the Hazara Pioneer Battalion in this respect.

I feel it better to finish the history of this club, in so far as I was concerned, here and now. When the IIIrd Corps Headquarters left Baghdad for Baqubah early in October, 1917, and again engaged in active operations, Percy Smith (Provost-Marshal) took over its management from Carter, but as his interest was centred on the race-course to the neglect of the other activities of the club, this arrangement was not an unqualified success. Besides, the work was too much for anyone but a whole-time man; so,

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when I assumed command of the Army in November, I wrote privately to Sir Charles Monro to ask him to help me out of the difficulty by sending me a special officer. He was kind enough to send me Colonel Paul, who managed the club for some time until the ideal man came on the scene in the person of an old friend, Major (Bunny) Hughes, the Secretary of the W.I.T.C., who, having rejoined for the War, was wasting his valuable gifts of organization in conducting troops between Bombay and Basra. Under his care the club flourished in all its departments, and when he finally left, after the end of the War, the club's finances were in a flourishing condition.

During the very hot weather I made numerous visits of inspection (one might perhaps more aptly term them friendly calls) to my two Divisions and their outlying posts. Egerton had his Headquarters in a house in Baqubah, but Cayley was under canvas, and I think was the better off of the two. Even in the hottest weather in Mesopotamia, if the floor of the tent is sunk some three or four feet, a canopy of rushes erected over the top, and the opening on the windward side filled up with a framework full of wet camel-thorn, it is wonderful how cool it can be kept. Then, at night one can sleep outside, and away from the radiation of houses the nights are comparatively cool. I well recall that, being on a visit to Egerton, we went out to see his detachments at Mahrut and Beled Ruz; having spent the night at the latter place, and slept coolly and comfortably in the open, we motored back to his Headquarters in Baqubah. The day was like a fiery furnace, and on going into the house it seemed quite cool in contrast with the intense heat outside, but on examining the thermometer hanging in the room I found it marked 122°.

Storks had their nests on nearly all the chimneys in

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Baqubah, and the noise they made at night was most curious, just like dozens of people rattling pairs of bones. These birds spent most of the day in the marshes, and, on coming back in the evening to feed their young ones, they poured out literally hundreds of frogs from their huge bills. No one interferes with the storks; in fact, I think the Arabs regard them with a sort of veneration as bringers of luck to the household.

Polo flourished in Baghdad all through the hot weather, first on a level piece of ground near the eastern gate and then at the Sporting Club. Goldie was in the front rank of players, and the IIIrd Corps Staff could produce a moderately good team, but I never managed to get hold of any really good ponies, and about July I was very distressed at losing the good little horse previously mentioned, owing to an accident on the picket lines.

On Sundays we used to go down to the Remount Depot, where Holdsworth (the head of the Remount Department) had organized a wonderful show. Capital yards, enclosed by huge mud walls and shaded by palm trees, for the different classes of horses; perpetual water-supply in each yard; chopping and mixing huts for feeds; forage-stores; an irrigated farm where all kinds of different green fodder were grown (and magnificent crops were produced from the land); altogether a model show, a triumph of organization, where horses flourished exceedingly.

Cassels had, in May, been appointed Brigadier-General, General Staff, at Headquarters, but when a new Cavalry Brigade (7th Hussars, Guides Cavalry, and 23rd Cavalry) arrived from India, he was placed in command of it. This new Brigade was not affiliated to the Cavalry Division, but remained an independent unit. Shuttleworth had relieved Cassels as G.S.O.1 of the 14th

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SCENE ON THE COURSE AT THE BAGHDAD RACES.

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Division, and Stoney (brother of Stoney of the K.O.S.B., who had been killed so unfortunately in Gallipoli) took his place on IIIrd Corps Staff.

Towards the end of September Brooking was entrusted by General Maude with the task of clearing the Turks out of Ramadie on the Euphrates. In addition to his own (15th) Division he was given Holland-Pryor's Cavalry Brigade and perhaps more artillery, but I do not know the details. The result was eminently satisfactory, and reflected the highest credit on the Commander and his troops, both cavalry and infantry. The cavalry, by a long and circuitous night march, established itself in rear of the enemy's position, and next morning the infantry attacked; the Turks stubbornly resisted, but were driven back to the river. At night they tried to break out to the north, but were held by the fire of the cavalry and, finding himself caught in a trap, the Divisional Commander surrendered with the remnant of his force, some 3,500 officers and men and 11 guns, shortly after daybreak.

Early in October I removed my Corps Headquarters to Baqubah and was soon engaged in some small operations to drive the Turks out of Shahraban and back into the Jebel Hamrin. This small operation was carried out by Thomson's Brigade without loss, and amongst other things it opened up fresh ground for black-partridge shooting. More important still, it paved the way towards expelling the enemy from the Jebel Hamrin and for our occupation of Mendali (famous for the excellence of its dates).

General Maude's next plan was the seizure of the pass through the Jebel Hamrin on the left bank of the Dyalah and the occupation of Mendali. This town was contiguous to the domain of the Potentate with the comic-

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opera title (the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh), who was a sitter on the fence but with leanings towards Turkey and Germany; in fact he was the happy possessor of a tame German doctor who influenced both his mind and his body. He had committed no overt act, but it was advisable to impress on him that we were the masters in Mesopotamia. To carry out this plan Maude sent me Norton's Cavalry Brigade in addition to my own Corps.

The plan I adopted was to dispatch Norton to Beled Ruz to bivouac in the palm groves secure from aeroplane observation and, on the night of the 18th/19th October, make a rapid march thence on Mendali in order to cut off and capture the small Turkish garrison there. On the same night Egerton with two brigades of his Division (less two battalions) marched to the Mahrut Canal—the garrison duties of Baghdad itself had been taken over in May by L. of C. troops—whilst Thomson with the 3rd Brigade remained at Shahraban. At dusk on the 19th Norton was to march from Mendali (which place would then be garrisoned by a detachment from Beled Ruz), water his horses at some springs at the eastern end of the Jebel Hamrin, and at daybreak push round the north of that range and move rapidly on Kizil Robat to cut the (presumed) enemy line of retreat. Egerton with his infantry was to make a night march to the eastern end of the same hills and at daybreak move west, along the line of hills against the left flank of the enemy's position. Thomson would move by night from Shahraban to the Ruz Canal, in front of the hostile position, bridge the canal at three different points and await orders. The 13th Division was to move up the right bank of the Dyalah and occupy Mansuriyeh.

Everything came off according to plan, yet, though we gained a bloodless victory, our bag of Turks was exceed-

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ingly small. The cavalry was a little slow at Mendali and in the dim dawn most of the small Turkish garrison got away. Then on the following day the net failed; the enemy, instead of retiring via Kizil Robat, elected to cross the Dyalah (very low at this time) in the gorge and gained the other bank in safety. Perhaps I was overcautious and would not allow Thomson to make a frontal attack until I could see Egerton's men coming along the crest, but at least we had gained a tactical victory without any loss, and I knew, from Keary's previous experience, that this muddle of hills was an awkward place for a frontal attack.

There was a strong hostile force not far from Kizil Robat, on the right bank of the river, and the enemy who had retired in front of the 13th Division had taken up a position on the Sakaltutan Pass which leads through Jebel Hamrin on the same bank, but further attacks would have entailed fresh plans and we had fulfilled our mission. The Jebel Hamrin on the left bank was in our possession and was soon put into a state of defence and a properly graded road was driven through the hills. By the simultaneous occupation of Mansuriyeh we now controlled the regulator, which governed the height of water in the four main canals, so that floods could not be produced to our detriment by enemy action.

Early in November the enemy made an extraordinary demonstration in front of Cobbe's position on the Tigris. Leaving their entrenched lines at Tekrit, they moved forward and established themselves within striking distance of our defensive position covering railhead near Istabulat. Cobbe, being uncertain what was behind this move, sent out aeroplanes to reconnoitre, and the reports brought back, by the evidently untrained observers, seemed to indicate an enormous accretion to the previously

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ascertained Turkish strength; they even reported islands in the Tigris as packed with the enemy. It afterwards transpired that large flocks of sheep had been mistaken for masses of Turks. Under the circumstances Cobbe thought it best to call up his troops from Beled and concentrate his whole Corps as well as to apply for the Cavalry Division to be sent to him; but whilst these preparations were in progress, the enemy again retired to Tekrit.

General Maude now directed Cobbe to attack the enemy at this place, and after a night march on the night of 4th–5th November the attack took place. After a heavy fight lasting all day, the Turks were driven from their fortified positions and during the night made good their retreat to the Fathah Gorge, where the Tigris cuts through the hills. The Cavalry Division had got, during its night march, too wide on the flank and not far enough forward, so it hardly pulled its weight in this battle. Over 300 prisoners were captured and the *Julnar* (the ill-fated steamer which had made the gallant but hopeless attempt to get through to the starving garrison of Kut during the attempted relief operations) was found aground in the river opposite Tekrit.

During the battle an enemy aviator played a clever trick on the Cavalry Division out on the flank. The hostile aeroplane flew over and was heavily fired on by artillery, Hotchkiss guns, machine-guns and rifles, then it was suddenly seen to nose-dive and come hurtling towards the ground amidst cheers from the cavalry. But within 300 feet of the ground the plane straightened, the aviator dropped bombs on the assembled horses and men, doing considerable damage, and sailed away apparently unharmed.

At the time I am now writing of, the Yilderim scheme

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seemed to have evaporated, the Turks were mostly out of harm's way and at IIIrd Corps Headquarters we were having an easy time with some sport thrown in. We had a polo ground, baked mud certainly, but for a time not too bad, where we played three days a week and in addition managed to get quite a lot of shooting, which was very good, along the banks of the river Dyalah, its various canals and the spills from them. Black partridge, snipe and duck abounded, though the supply of cartridges did not admit of much snipe-shooting. There were also numbers of wild pig which inhabited the rice-fields and swamps bordering the canals in the neighbourhood of Shahraban where, at a later period, parties managed to spear a number of boars. I never had the opportunity to take part in this sport, but it must have been quite exciting, for the wild boar in Mesopotamia is a huge beast—indeed I heard of one being killed which measured 42 inches at the shoulder, whereas in India one regards anything that measures 34 inches or over as a monster.

On the 17th November we had arranged a polo match between IIIrd Corps Staff and the 13th Division, and were just going down to the ground when a message came to me to say that the Army Commander was dangerously ill and would like me to go to Baghdad as soon as convenient. Needless to say I dropped all idea of polo and started as soon as possible. On arrival in Baghdad I saw Willcox (the famous physician who had surrendered a lucrative practice in Harley Street to come as consulting physician to the Army in Mesopotamia), who told me that Maude was suffering from cholera and that he could hold out very little hope of recovery.

All the same, hope springs eternal. I knew his

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constitution was excellent and that he was in most skilful hands, so that things had not reached their worst. Next day (Sunday) was both an anxious and depressing one. The bulletins issued held out no hope and everyone was glum. I dealt with and signed such papers as were necessary, and then the end came that evening.

War is apt to blunt one's feelings and the sense of personal loss is deadened as a rule by the necessity for sinking one's private sorrows in the interests of the State. But here was a loss which was irreplaceable both to the individual and the State. On the following afternoon there was buried, in the centre of the newly formed cemetery outside the North Gate, perhaps the greatest General that Great Britain had produced since Lord Roberts. And I say now advisedly that I do not think that anyone but he could have raised the morale of a practically defeated army in April 1916 to such a pitch of confidence in its own invincibility as that same army had attained in April 1917. His short but brilliant campaign will for ever remain as a great exemplification of the three main principles of war (Organisation, Strategy, Tactics) for the military student of the future.

How he imbibed the cholera germs which caused his death, I do not know. Both Willcox and the Political Department pooh-poohed the idea of deliberate intention, but certain circumstances were suspicious. Threats against his life had been made, as had threats against that of Hawker, the military Governor of Baghdad. About ten days previously Hawker's Staff Officer, who, owing to indisposition on the part of his Chief, had deputised for him at some function where refreshments were served by the same purveyor or contractor who served them at the Jewish entertainment which Maude attended with Mrs. Egan, and he died of acute cholera.

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I said nothing at the time but I gave the C.I.D. people three months to find evidence against this contractor. As nothing came of my patience, or their detective skill, I exercised my powers and had this person and his assistant deported as undesirables and I was probably, indeed almost certainly, unjust in the action I took. Still, though there was no epidemic of cholera in the city, it is always endemic, and the contractor should have been particularly careful about a thing like milk on such an occasion.

I now, in virtue of my seniority, took over temporary command of the Army, though I did not dream of doing, nor even wish to do so, permanently. In fact when I had an interview with Percy Cox and he suggested the possibility, I scoffed at the idea. Commanding a fighting formation is one thing, but the mass of organisation, the various directorates, the political conundrums, and above all the enormous amount of office work involved, filled me with dismay. Then came a cable appointing me to succeed to the command, and how could I refuse? There seemed to be a fate which was pushing an unwilling victim up to such a height that his ultimate end would probably be that of Humpty-Dumpty.

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CHAPTER XVI

I TAKE COMMAND

THE principal Staff Officers of G.H.Q., when I assumed command of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, consisted of Hopwood, who had lately succeeded Money as Chief of the General Staff; Ready, Deputy Adjutant-General; Stuart-Wortley, Deputy Quarter-Master General; and Williams as Military Secretary. Within a few days, however, a personal cable came from Sir William Robertson, the C.I.G.S. In this he said that he did not know me, that I had no Staff experience, that he had no personal knowledge of Hopwood and that therefore I must get rid of Hopwood and take someone whom he did know and could trust. He suggested either Gillman or Hoskins. Gillman had lately arrived in command of the newly formed 17th Indian Division and Hoskins had succeeded Keary in command of the 3rd (Lahore) Division.

This was not a very encouraging start, indeed it almost seemed that the C.I.G.S. had already repented having appointed me to command. Certainly if only he had realised how little desirous I was of having the honour conferred on me, somebody else would have been G.O.C.-in-C. in my stead. I replied to this cable by saying that no one regretted my lack of Staff experience more than I did, that I was perfectly satisfied with Hopwood whom I was not prepared to sacrifice to my own ineptitude, but that if he insisted, and I had to take another C.G.S., I would prefer Gillman whom I knew

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personally. No personal cable came in reply to this, but instead an order for Hopwood to proceed home at once and Gillman's appointment as C.G.S.

This was naturally a great blow to Hopwood and also to Gillman; for Gillman had already been M.G.G.S. to Milne in Salonika; he had only lately taken over command of a new Division, which he was busily engaged in training and organizing in a most efficient manner, and very naturally he wanted to continue in an active command. They both, however, took the news very well and Gillman was good enough to say that as he had to take up the duties of C.G.S. again, he would sooner do it for me than anyone else.

Gillman both by his personality and previous experience was more fitted than Hopwood, who was a comparatively junior officer, to control and regulate the Staff duties, but I certainly think that, being the person chiefly concerned, I should have been consulted. The method adopted was not one tending to give confidence to a newly appointed G.O.C.-in-C. By the time Hopwood reached home, Robertson had been replaced as C.I.G.S. by Henry Wilson; he was sent out to France as an understudy on the Staff, and then unfortunately broke down in health and had eventually to be invalided out of the army.

Meanwhile two new Divisions had arrived in Mesopotamia, the 17th, already mentioned, and the 18th Indian Division under command of Hew Fanshawe, the eldest of the three indefatigable brothers, all Generals, of that distinguished family. Egerton succeeded me in command of the IIIrd Corps and Thomson was appointed to the 14th Division in his stead. Leslie, from command of a Brigade in the Ist Corps, took Gillman's place at the head of the 17th Division.

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No one knew what policy had been dictated to Maude nor what his plans were, but one could not well sit with folded hands so long as there were Turkish forces within possible striking distance.

The troops under my command were disposed as follows: Euphrates line, the 15th Division under Brooking, with his advanced troops covering Ramadi; Tigris line, the Ist Corps (3rd and 7th Divisions) under Cobbe, with his most forward position at Tekrit; Dyalah line, the IIIrd Corps (13th and 14th Divisions) under Egerton, holding Deli Abbas on the right bank and the line of the Jebel Hamrin on the left bank; the 17th and 18th Divisions undergoing training near Baghdad on the right bank of the Tigris. The Cavalry Division under Jones was encamped on the left bank north of Baghdad whilst the independent Cavalry Brigade under Cassels was undergoing training near Hinaidie, south of Baghdad. Then there was a force at Ahwaz, for the protection of the Anglo-Persian oilfields, with a cavalry detachment at Shush (Shushan the Palace, mentioned in the book of Daniel); the numerous units guarding the Lines of Communication, as well as the Labour Corps units on that line, under MacMunn's control.

Towards the latter part of November a Russian Force, calling itself the Partisanski detachment, the members of which had sworn never to desert their allies, arrived at Mendali, having come down from Persia by mountain tracks through the Territory of the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh. This force, consisting of 1,200 men of all arms, was commanded by a somewhat remarkable man, a Colonel Bicharakov, who, partially disabled from the effects of some seven wounds which he had sustained during the war, remained a born leader of Cossacks and a most gallant gentleman. The Partisanski had a small amount

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PARTY FROM THE RUSSIAN FORCE IN PERSIA.

Back row, left to right: Lieutenant-Colonel Rowlandson, Colonel Rajhanov, General Beach, Persian Officer in Russian service and Captain Tenakov. *Front row:* Two Cossacks.

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of pack transport, two mountain guns and only one small tent which served as sleeping accommodation, surgery and dispensary, for three ladies, one of whom was a doctor, one a nurse, and one (Princess Lieven) what we would call a V.A.D. Bicharakov's staff officer was named McGowan and hailed from Dundee, whilst the name of his supply officer was Leslie, also a Scotsman, whose family had gone to Russia in the time of Peter the Great, but who did not know a word of English.

I sent supplies over to Mendali but, as Colonel Bicharakov placed himself unreservedly under my orders, I very soon ordered the detachment to march across to Shahraban both for convenience of supply and because of an outbreak of smallpox in Mendali. In connection with this the following episode really happened. Orders were issued that Mendali town was placed out of bounds for all troops; two of the Russians, however, disregarded the order, were arrested by our police, and handed over to their own people for punishment. They were tried by a soldier's council and condemned to be shot. I sent back the sentence for revision, pointing out that for a minor military offence the penalty was, to say the least of it, excessive; so the council met again and altered the sentence to three days' confinement to camp.

Except on Egerton's front the nearest Turkish forces were over thirty miles distant from our most advanced posts, so this front promised the best results from an immediate offensive. My idea was for a rounding-up movement to enclose and destroy the Turkish forces holding the Passes through the Jebel Hamrin on the right bank of the Dyalah and to clear the country north of that range of hills as far as Qarah Teppeh. For the operation I placed Bicharakov's detachment under Egerton's orders, partly for the purpose of testing its reliability

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under fire and partly because I thought its mobility might be useful in a wide outflanking movement.

Egerton submitted his plan of attack, which briefly was for the 14th Division to cross the Dyalah at a point up-stream of Quizil Rabat on the night of the 2nd/3rd December, whilst Bicharakov crossed at the same time near Mirjana; at dawn both to advance towards Nahrin Kupri and get behind the enemy's position on the Jebel Hamrin. At daybreak on the 3rd the 13th Division was to attack the enemy's positions from Abu Zanabil to Suhaniyeh and, after driving in the Turkish advanced posts, reconnoitre the approaches to the Sakaltutan Pass preparatory to assaulting it before dawn on the 4th.

The plan was approved and, to hold the enemy to his ground in the neighbourhood of Abu Ghuraib, I directed Jones with his cavalry division to advance up the Adhaim, reconnoitre the Pass through the Jebel Hamrin at that place and, if he found it unoccupied, push through and move against Umr Maidan.

The IIIrd Corps orders, for this somewhat difficult and complicated operation, were a model of conciseness and clarity, in which I recognized Fraser's handiwork, and practically everything worked out according to plan, except that the Russians after crossing the river found themselves opposed by superior forces and failed to join up with the 14th Division. What really happened was that the gallant Bicharakov was taken ill with dysentery but, quite undaunted, had himself carried on a stretcher and commanded from that position; eventually he collapsed and the Partisanski, being a one-man show, retired back across the river. Still the Russians had put up a good fight, and several individuals had distinguished themselves by their bravery, so I was not altogether disappointed at their début.

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I received secret information that the Turkish Commander, on getting news of the cavalry move up the Adhaim, had sent orders to the Abu Ghuraib garrison to allow this force to get well into the narrow and intricate Pass and then attack it in ground where mounted troops would be helpless, so I at once sent off a message to Cassels, who was acting as G.H.Q. liaison officer with Jones, to instruct Jones that he was to confine his operations to demonstrations and reconnaissance. I am sure that this was a great disappointment to Jones, and, though Cassels, who had served on the General Staff at G.H.Q., knew that my information was correct and how it had been obtained, it was too close a secret to be divulged further, and I was therefore obliged to keep Jones in the dark.

The rest of the plan came off successfully and, in addition to those killed, about 250 Turkish prisoners fell into our hands, as well as two guns and a number of machine guns, whilst our casualties were very few. Our troops occupied Qarah Teppeh—Nahrin Kupri—Mirjana —Abu Zanabil and the Sakaltutan Pass, and a few days later we occupied Khanikhin without opposition.

During the period of which I am now writing, Allenby in Palestine had carried out a series of most successful operations against the Turks which, on the 9th December, culminated in the capture of Jerusalem and gave the death-blow to the projected Yilderim scheme for the recapture of Baghdad. It was also apparent that strategically Palestine was the most suitable theatre in which to finally crush the Turkish power, so that, on being asked by the War Office whether I could spare troops for Palestine, I at once offered to send two Divisions. Consequent on this I was ordered to dispatch one Division, and for this purpose selected the 7th under

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Fane, which was therefore withdrawn from Tekrit and concentrated at Baghdad, preparatory to its dispatch down the Tigris by rail and river for embarkation at Basra, being replaced in the Ist Corps by the 17th, commanded by Leslie.

When I first took over command I had felt it my duty to try to live up to the example of my distinguished predecessor in the matter of work in the office, but, with my very able Staff to cope with the details of the various problems which presented themselves, and confining myself to major points on which a decision was required, I very soon began to curtail my office hours. Gradually I extended this to the Staff and insisted on everyone at G.H.Q. getting reasonable time out of doors for exercise and recreation, and I feel sure that the work did not suffer owing to this system.

Before the 7th Division finally left Baghdad I had the pleasure (mingled with sorrow) of presenting to the members thereof immediate rewards for distinguished conduct in the field, which had been conferred on them by our late great and lamented Commander for bravery shown in the battle of Tekrit. I also motored out with Williams one bitterly cold morning to Shahraban to present immediate rewards to the men of the IIIrd Corps and the Russian detachment who had distinguished themselves during the operations of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th December, 1917.

Percy Cox was indefatigable in bringing the area behind the Army under administrative control; he possessed enormous influence with the Arabs, who had for long recognized in him a strong, wise, and just administrator. I often wondered how he had so greatly impressed the Arabs, but I think that the fact that he had said so little and showed such patience with them when,

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with true Oriental diplomacy, they talked of everything except what was in their minds, was a salient factor in the hold he had gained; besides, they recognized in him a straight man who dealt honestly with them. His reputation carried weight throughout Arabia, and Cokkus, as they called him, became, amongst the Arabs, a generic name for all Political Officers, so that an officer in political charge of a district was always known amongst the local inhabitants as a "Cokkus."

Cox did not lack a sense of humour, as witness the following story. Some time in 1915 the anti-British activities of a German named Wassmuss were tending to foment trouble amongst the tribes in south-east Persia; indeed, the danger caused by his lying propaganda was so serious that the safety of the oilfields was for a time in doubt. Cox thereupon issued a proclamation promising a reward for the capture of Wassmuss alive or dead. This having come to the knowledge of our Foreign Office, he received a cable ordering him to have the proclamation withdrawn at once, and adding that His Majesty's Ministers viewed his action with abhorrence and detestation. Like Brer Rabbit, Cox "lay low and said nuffin'" until some six months later, when the Foreign Office cabled to ask whether he could not suggest some means of curbing the mischievous activities of Wassmuss. Upon receiving this he cabled back "that fear of exciting the abhorrence and detestation of His Majesty's Ministers precluded him from making any suggestion."

A curious Indian political job was the dispatch to Mesopotamia of a battalion known as the 49th Bengalis, which was composed of a lot of stunted immature Bengali boys. The formation of this battalion was the result of efforts made by the Bengali politicians, to enable them to say that the population of Bengal had furnished its quota

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in defence of the Empire and thus add weight to their agitation for complete self-government. Sir Charles Monro wrote to Maude and asked him to give a personal eye to the well-being and training of this battalion, so Maude had it brought up to Baghdad and treated it with special consideration. In fact it was dry-nursed, a camp in a shady grove by the river was pitched for it, special rations were given to it, and no work, except a mild form of training, was demanded of it.

Shortly after taking over command I went to inspect this unit, and being met by Lieut.-Colonel Barrett (known as The Boomer on account of the quality of his voice), was taken round the battalion, which was not drawn up in the ordinary way but dotted about in squads, some large, some small. On arrival at the first group Barrett announced: "The Measles Squad"; at the second, "The Whooping Cough Squad," at the third, "The Scarlet Fever Squad," and so on through most known diseases. The *crême-de-la-crême* of the battalion, those not convalescing from any particular disease, numbered some sixty-five, but the only *man* I saw was the senior Indian officer, a brother of a prominent Bengali politician.

I sent in a report on the state of the unit to Army Headquarters in India, and expressed the hope that I might be allowed to send it back to India as being perfectly useless for any purpose in Mesopotamia, besides being a danger, for medical reasons, to other troops. My proposal was not agreed to, and I was told to report again in three months' time; therefore, when I reorganized the troops on Lines of Communication, I sent the 49th Bengalis to a place on the L. of C., where it would be by itself and unable to spread disease outside its own particular circle.

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In three months' time I called for a report on the unit from Austin, who commanded the section in which it was. The report was even worse than my original one, and I sent it on without comment to A.H.Q. in India. In answer to this I received instructions to assemble a special board of combatant and medical officers to test the battalion, and report on its fitness, for the information of the C.-in-C. in India. Holland-Pryor was appointed president of this board and, though I will not vouch for the exact accuracy of the figures, I think it was found that not more than sixty were capable of marching five miles when fully equipped, and the medical portion of the report showed no improvement in general physique. This report having reached India, I was instructed that I might begin to send the battalion back, but at the rate of not more than thirty men per month, which was practically equivalent to saying it must remain in Mesopotamia.

The next thing that happened was that two Indian Officers of the battalion were murdered by their own men. The death reports having reached their next of kin in India, the news spread like wild-fire in Calcutta, and processions were formed with banners bearing noble words, such as: "Bengali patriots die for their King and Country." When the real facts came to light I imagine there must have been an anti-climax.

The final touch to this sordid story occurred after the Armistice, when the question arose as to the strength of the garrison to remain in Mesopotamia. I know that twelve battalions were to be retained on Lines of Communication, and India decreed that the 49th Bengalis should be one of these. I was most indignant, and wrote a decidedly untactful letter saying that if this Battalion was to be kept in Mesopotamia it could only be for

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Indian political purposes, and that therefore that country should bear the cost and not the British tax-payer. The answer to that was terse: I was told to mind my own business. It is an amazing story, and when I add that India seriously suggested that this battalion should be used in action against the Turks, it is even more amazing. I wonder what would have happened to the British Officers serving with it?

Early in December I started on a tour of inspection of the L. of C., going down the Tigris on that good stern-wheeler the *S* 1 which MacMunn placed at my disposal. In her comfortable cabin I managed to get through a good deal of private correspondence. The Captain of the *S* 1 was a Canadian, a very efficient skipper who thoroughly knew the river, and all its navigation marks as organized by the Inland Water Transport Directorate, and a most amusing man.

The course of the Tigris between Baghdad and Kut is the most tortuous thing one can imagine. The enormous loops bring one back, after more than an hour's hard steaming, to practically the same spot; certainly one could in some cases easily throw a stone across the neck of the peninsula thus formed. We called in at some of the larger posts such as Zeur, Aziziyeh, and Baghailah, and found everything well organized for defence, good arrangements for water, and excellent sanitary dispositions. Life on the L. of C. must be remarkably dull, but the Indian soldier is easily contented and, thanks to the efforts and kindness of ladies in India, the posts were well supplied with games and reading matter.

Our first halt of any length was in Kut, and this place was of particular interest, as we had only seen it previously from the other bank of the river. From the

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tops of the houses we could see our late fighting grounds, such as the Hai salient and the Dahra bend, laid out like a map at our feet, and one wondered how the Turks could have been so easily deceived and surprised on so many occasions. I suppose the answer is that you cannot see the map at your feet during the hours of darkness, and that was when the surprises were prepared. Kut, under the ægis of the capable political officer in charge, was quickly being rebuilt, and had attained to an unaccustomed cleanliness. There was a comfortable hospital, though I was glad to note that it was not by any means full. The garrison was fit, and the comforts and recreations of the men well provided for.

We worked our way down to Amarah, the Headquarters of General Austin, who was commanding the Defence troops on the Tigris L. of C. Here everyone appeared to be happy and contented, and a great change in the amenities of life had been brought about in the course of the past year. Amongst other units at this L. of C. centre, I was much interested in a Burmah battalion, amongst the personnel of which was a company of Kachins, stocky little men much akin to the Gurkhas in appearance and physique, and the material out of which good soldiers are made. They later did very good work during trouble with the Kurds. The Y.M.C.A. was running a good show here with an excellent cinema, concerts, lectures, and other recreations for the troops. There were several hospitals, both British and Indian, very efficiently staffed and administered, but again I was glad to note that the number of patients was small. The head Matron told me that a number of the nurses had been informed that morning that they were to be relieved and sent to India, so I remarked that I presumed they would be very glad of the change, to

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which she retorted: "Glad! There has been nothing but floods of tears since the orders came."

In addition to recreations for the men, an officers' club had been formed and also a club and convalescent home for nursing sisters, the latter, a very comfortable hostel, entirely provided by Lady Willingdon and the women of Bombay.

Amarah was a big distributing centre, or intermediate base, to which the heavier draught river steamers could be sent, and MacMunn had spared no pains to make efficient arrangements for loading and unloading steamers, thereby economizing transport and saving invaluable time. A permanent bridge had been built across the river to replace the old bridge of boats, and this, with its easily worked opening for steamers passing up and down the river, was another great time-saving factor. The local Resources Directorate had organized grass-farms in the neighbourhood, and the Remount Department had a well-administered Depot with a good reserve of horses and mules. Altogether I was well pleased with all I saw at Amarah, and with the progress made in efficiency since seeing the place in November 1916.

From Amarah we continued our journey to Basra, where I was met by MacMunn. Here a veritable transformation had taken place, and the signs of efficient administration were evident on all sides. Confusion had given place to orderliness. Ocean-going ships now discharged their cargoes from alongside well-built quays, and the turn round of the said ships had been reduced from thirty days to forty-eight hours. What this meant in the saving of shipping at the worst period of the submarine menace can hardly be calculated in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence.

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Docks had been made for repair and construction work, sheds for storage of perishable goods, the quays were well equipped with cranes and other devices for quick handling of cargoes. Dredgers had transformed the foreshore from irrigated date-palm groves into dry land, where the lay-out of the railway termini of the Basra–Amarah and Basra–Nasariyeh railways had been organized and where space was available for the huge accumulation of stores. An island in the Shatt-el-Arab, originally not much more than a mud-bank, had been raised well above water-level for the storage of such inflammable articles as petrol, crude oil, and fire-wood. A narrow-gauge railway line carried supplies to all the garrison camps, and a concrete road, the only possible solution for motor traffic on a mud flat, solved the problem of inter-communication over the extended area. Altogether a wonderful transformation had been effected by MacMunn and his able and energetic assistants. Basra in the space of one year had become one of the most efficient river ports in the world. I have heard accusations of extravagance in connection with this wonderful development, but am confident that these were ill-founded, and that only absolutely necessary works were initiated and carried out, also that real efficiency can never prove to be an extravagance in the long run.

There were many other points of interest at Basra, and these included the offices of the 3rd Echelon most ably organized by Campbell where, by the card-index system, one was quickly informed of the career and fate of any member of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force. In the hospitals, the only fault I could find was that the members of the West Indian Labour Corps, full-blooded negroes, were mixed up with British soldiers,

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instead of being in separate wards. I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Jones, the very efficient head of the Nursing Service, whose tact, sympathy, and firmness had done so much to make the service, for which she was responsible, such an unqualified success. Several Bombay firms had branches in Basra, amongst others Messrs. Evans, Fraser & Co., who supplied what they were pleased to term intimate garments for the nurses. I heard a story that Miss Jones went to their shop one day and, on being shown some dainty silk lingerie, exclaimed: "But surely the nurses do not buy these," to which the shopman replied: "No, madam, but the officers do."

However, I had to push on, as there was still a great deal to see apart from the Tigris line, so, after a few days' stay, we started by train for Nasariyeh. On the way I found the forces guarding the railway occupying well-made defensive posts, and the troops well looked after and seemingly content with their lot. Nasariyeh is curiously situated in so much as it could at any moment be destroyed by inundation, and the story goes that its founder, one Nasr, a powerful sheikh of the Muntafik Arabs, selected the site for this reason. Being asked by the Turkish Government to found a city as the capital of the Muntafik country, he was so distrustful of the intentions of the Turks with regard to himself that he chose this destructible site in order that, in case of treachery to him, the town could at once be rendered uninhabitable by his followers, and not remain as an asset to the Turkish Government. After our occupation, embankments had had to be built to safeguard the town against an attempt at inundation, and these had proved successful when the Muntafik Arabs had been hostile. Now, however, thanks to Cox and his political wisdom,

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more or less friendly relations had been established with this powerful and well-armed tribe.

Amongst other units at Nasariyeh I found a battery of 15-pounders, the personnel of which was composed of Anglo-Indians. They seemed to be smart, well-disciplined men and of quite good physique. An officer of this battery, who had been promoted from the ranks of a regular battery asked for an interview, and it appeared that he was under arrest, pending trial by Court-Martial, on a charge of drunkenness. His object in seeing me was to ask me to deal summarily with the case and dispense with trial. He fully acknowledged the correctness of the charge, but I did not see my way to accede to his request, especially as I had gathered that it was not a solitary lapse on his part. Later he was tried and acquitted by the Court. I mention this instance because, owing to the numerous cases of miscarriage of justice in trials by courts-martial, the members of which had a very elementary knowledge of military law, I had to establish permanent courts in the different districts for the due administration of justice.

The defences of Nasariyeh were well organized, sanitation was good and the health of the garrison satisfactory. There were many points of interest near by which I should much like to have seen, such as Ur of the Chaldees and the passage through the Hammar Lake, which it was in my mind to improve by dredging, so that it could be negotiated by steamers, but time did not admit.

We returned by rail to Basra and re-embarked on the *S* 1, which took us up the Karun River to Ahwaz, the headquarters of the force allocated to the protection of the Anglo-Persian oilfields and the maintenance of order in South-east Persia. Everything here was thoroughly

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satisfactory and peaceful. The Bakhtiari Khans were playing their part in the protection of the oilfields themselves and the pipe-line to Abadan. A small disturbance which had occurred at Shustar some time previously had been at once checked by the prompt action taken by the officer commanding at Ahwaz, and there had been no recrudescence of the trouble. We motored from Ahwaz to Shush (Shushan the Palace), where the headquarters and two squadrons of the 5th Cavalry were located. M. de Morgan, a distinguished French archæologist, had some years previously been engaged in the task of excavating the site of the palace of Darius at this place, and I believe the finds there had been of great historical interest.

With the mass of stones dug out from the ruins the French archæological mission had built a castle in the Saracenic style, and this was now occupied by the officers of the Cavalry detachment, whilst the men were camped under the walls. The castle was really quite small but, situated as it was on an eminence, it looked enormous from a distance and was a land-mark for miles round. Practically all the treasure-trove had found its way to France, but the foundations and plan of the palace were still visible on the site, and broken fragments of fluted columns were lying about on the ground. The Tomb of Daniel was near at hand, and formed a place of pilgrimage to Jew and Mohammedan alike. One young officer was very puzzled by the pilgrims, and said he could not understand why they should come, as he had always understood that Daniel was "one of us." I rather envied the lot of the cavalry in this peaceful and interesting spot, in which shooting and pig-sticking were close at hand and of the best.

That evening we returned to Ahwaz, where I found

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a cable waiting from the C.I.G.S. to tell me that General Smuts was proceeding to Egypt to consult with Allenby and myself with regard to the best means of completing the defeat of Turkey, but that as it would be impossible for me to leave my command for so long a period, I was to send my C.G.S. to represent my views. I at once wired to Gillman to meet me at Basra, and started for that place the following morning, thus not being able to visit the oilfields, much to my regret. As a matter of fact, Gillman's journey to Egypt was a useless public expense. I had already intimated my willingness to send two divisions to Allenby and, as it turned out, General Smuts, who arrived in Egypt long before Gillman, saw Hopwood, then on his way home, who also knew my ideas, and before Gillman's arrival Smuts had cabled his recommendations to the Cabinet. Conferences are, no doubt, most useful things, but there can also be no doubt that they were overdone both during and after the war.

If my rôle in Mesopotamia was to be merely a defensive one, then the force was too large, and it was apparent that I could spare a proportion of it. Anyhow it was for the C.I.G.S. to decide where troops could be most usefully employed, and everything pointed to Palestine.

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CHAPTER XVII

KHAN BAGDADI

ONE of the principal objects I had had in view when making the tour of Lines of Communication which I have described, was to see where troops could be combed out, so that, without drawing on the fighting divisions, garrisons could be found to hold the whole of the country behind our front and especially the fertile and important region lying along the banks of the Euphrates. In this I found no great difficulty, and after my return to Baghdad a readjustment of L. of C. troops was carried out, the whole of the Euphrates line, between Felujah and Nasariyeh, being brought under our political control and jurisdiction.

This portion of the country included the important irrigation projects initiated by Sir William Willcocks, chief amongst which was the great Hindiyeh barrage not very far from ancient Babylon. Other important centres which came under our control were the holy cities of Kerbela and Nejef and the towns of Hillah, Samawa, and Diwaniyeh. The reasons for getting control of all this district were to check Turkish and German intrigue amongst the fanatical populations of the holy cities, and encourage agriculture in these fertile regions to such an extent as to make the army in Mesopotamia, as far as possible, independent of overseas supplies.

Garbett of the Indian Civil Service, working as first Revenue officer under Percy Cox, was selected to work out a scheme of agricultural development, and very

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ably he carried out his work. Even during the first year the harvest produced under his direction enabled us to reduce very materially our demands on India for grain and forage. Whilst we thus increased our own sources of local supply, we were also in a position to prevent supplies from the Euphrates valley being smuggled through to the Turks.

Following on our occupation of Baghdad in March 1917, the Turkish forces on the Euphrates, which were retiring on Ramadie, made an attempt to destroy the Hindiyeh Barrage, but the Arabs showed themselves so hostile to such an act of sabotage that the Turks had perforce to abandon their project. The Barrage is a magnificent achievement of British engineering skill. Designed by Sir William Willcocks and built by Sir John Jackson, it has proved of immense benefit to the local agriculturists, owing to the thousands of acres of fertile land irrigated through its instrumentality.

Below the sluice-gates of the Barrage can be seen hundreds of Tigris salmon, a species of carp, which, barred from further progress up this branch of the river, are lying there in serried ranks, a prey to the Arab fishermen. These fish attain to an enormous size. I personally saw one which weighed 235 lb. and have heard of others bigger still. Above the delta, north of Samarra, on the Tigris, and up-stream of Hit on the Euphrates, they can be caught by spinning when the water clears after the flood season. The Dyalah and Adhaim Rivers are also worth fishing and, though I never heard of a fish being caught in them by legitimate means larger than 56 lb., I do know that one of over 150 lb. was done to death on the Adhaim by Mills grenades. The Arabs also catch them in the delta portion of the Tigris by means of night-lines baited with dates.

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During Gillman's absence in Egypt, Fraser came from the IIIrd Corps to take his place as C.G.S. at Headquarters and very ably he filled the position. Central Arabian politics began to come to the front about this time, and our mission at Nejd, the capital of the Wahabi Sultan, Ibn Saoud, strongly advocated supplying this potentate with guns, rifles, and munitions to enable him to take hostile action against the pro-Turk Sultan of Ryadh (Ibn Rashid). Although willing to send him a limited number of rifles, I jibbed at the idea of guns and howitzers, not being able to see that the advantage to be gained at the moment would be commensurate with the risks involved in making Ibn Saoud too powerful a factor in Central Arabia. About this time also, a "Hush-hush" mission, under the able leadership of General Dunsterville ("Stalky"), arrived in the country.

This mission, later known as "Dunsterforce," was designed to get through to the Caucasus, where its rôle would be to combine such unstable elements as the Armenians, Georgians, and Azerbaijanis, and organize them into an army capable of resisting the Turco-German forces. These were credited with the intention of an eastward drive towards Afghanistan, and the raising of a Pan-Islamic offensive against British rule in India. Presumably the idea of the Dunsterville mission and its objective emanated from "The Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet." I was not consulted in the matter and knew nothing of the political reasons which prompted its dispatch, but, had the Eastern Committee done me the honour of asking for my opinion, I should certainly have advised against the whole project.

The mission was entirely independent of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, and I was merely instructed to render it all possible assistance in its journey through

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Persia to the Caspian. There must, of course, have been exact and definite information in possession of our Foreign Office that a Turco-German move against India through Persia and Afghanistan was a concrete and dangerous fact, but I had only heard rumours which I entirely disbelieved. Bogies created by the enemy or by our own too lively imagmations are of frequent occurrence and apt to become a nuisance if encouraged. India, denuded of troops, was nervous, and had established a cordon along the Afghan-Persian frontier as far as Meshed, though how this could prevent *agents provocateurs* from getting into Afghanistan I cannot imagine. However, the Dunsterville mission had nothing to do with me, it was not under my orders, and I did not then realize that it was going to involve us in an invasion of Persia, a neutral country which did not want us there at all.

However, in view of the necessity for clearing the route into Persia for Dunsterforce I occupied Kasr-i-Shirin, and sent a small column as far as Pai-Tak, at the foot of the Tak-i-Girra Pass. This Pass is the historical route down which the armies of many powerful kings had, in bygone ages, marched to the conquest and loot of the rich cities of the fertile delta land now called Mesopotamia. In many ways I was glad to open up the route into Persia, as I wanted to re-open trade between Baghdad and Persia for the mutual benefit of both.

The Russian army in Persia had now become infected with the disease known as Bolshevism, and the men were deserting in large numbers, making their way towards the Caspian and disposing of their arms and munitions for purchase of food *en route*. This disintegration of the Russian force inspired ambitious projects in the mind of one Kuchik Khan, the Chief of a Tribe known as the Jungalis inhabiting the forest-clad hills between Resht

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and Enzeli, who later became the bogey-man of both the Persian Government, and Sir Charles Marling, the British Minister at Teheran.

General Baratoff, Russian C. in C. in Persia, feeling that he had no stable elements left in his army, with the exception of Colonel Bicharakov and his Partisanski detachment, ordered the Colonel to return as soon as possible to Persia, so that a more or less disciplined force might be at hand to cover the withdrawal to the Caspian of the remnants of the Russian forces. Bicharakov came to see me, and explained that he thought it his duty to comply with this order, and sought my permission which I willingly accorded. The Russian ladies had succumbed to dysentery and small-pox, and were now in hospital in Baghdad, so that they could not return with the Partisanskis. Indeed, Princess Lieven had eventually to be sent to India to convalesce, and there Lady Willingdon took charge of her welfare until she was completely recovered, after which she returned to Mesopotamia and took up nursing duties in one of the Basra hospitals.

I have mentioned the capture of the Turkish Force on the Euphrates in October 1917. Now another detached force was located at or in front of Hit, and it was evident that this was being continually reinforced. I wanted Hit for the sake of its bitumen and lime, so ordered Brooking to make preparatory arrangements for its capture and that of the Turkish force if possible. However, after the experience of the Turks at Ramadie, the commander was a shy bird, and at the first hint of an advance on our part he withdrew his force to a position some two miles north of Hit. I must confess that I was not surprised at his timidity. The poor man had a total strength of some 6,000, and a very exiguous line of communication with his nearest support, some 300 miles

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distant. I had little hope of taking the Turks by surprise, but as there was no immediate hurry, I ordered Brooking to keep in touch by means of contact patrols and get supplies forward under cover of their activities.

In spite of the snow on the Passes, Dunsterville, with a small advance party of his mission, left Baghdad on 10th January, and eventually with much perseverance reached the port of Enzeli at the south end of the Caspian, where he and his party were promptly made prisoners by the Bolshevists. Dunsterville, the gifted possessor of a silver tongue and with a good knowledge of both the Russians and their language, managed to persuade his captors to release the party, but they did so only on condition that he retraced his footsteps and made no attempt to cross the Caspian.

This was virtually the end of the Dunsterville mission, the headquarters of which remained for some time at Hamadan, where Dunsterville employed his gifts of eloquence in trying to persuade the Persian notables that they really wanted the British in their country. For many miles on either side of the road from Teheran to the Tak-i-girra Pass the country had been eaten bare by Turks and Russians in turn, and the poor inhabitants along this route were dying of starvation in hundreds. The Persian Government was either unable or unwilling to deal with such a catastrophe, so Dunsterville at Hamadan and Colonel Kennion, British Consul at Kermanshah, organized relief measures and worked indefatigably to mitigate the horrors of the famine, during the continuance of which many authenticated cases of cannibalism occurred.

The occupation of the Euphrates line between Felujah and Nasariyeh had been carried out peaceably on the whole, though a few recalcitrant sheikhs had had

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to be sternly dealt with. No troops had been permitted to enter the Shiah holy cities of Nejef and Kerbela, but near Nejef a troop of the 10th (Indian) Cavalry had been fired on when exercising within a few hundred yards of the city walls. For this offence retribution was exacted in the shape of a heavy fine, though the two sheikhs who were known to be concerned in the outrage evaded arrest and became outlaws.

The Dunsterville mission having failed to get through to the Caucasus by peaceful means, pressure at the instance of Sir Charles Marling and Dunsterville began to be brought on me to send two Divisions into Persia. Sir Charles even went so far as to represent that, on the final withdrawal of the Russian forces, Teheran, as well as the Shah's Government, would be at the mercy of hordes of Jangalis led by Kuchik Khan. He pressed for two Divisions to be sent from Mesopotamia, and averred that he could furnish the necessary supplies for this force from local resources.

I was very averse to this invasion of Persia, and could not help thinking that we ought to have taken up the standpoint of its inviolability and virtuously declared that never would we invade its neutrality. From a purely military point of view the creation of another seven hundred miles of communications, and most of that distance through a mountainous country with a mere track as a road, seemed to me to be madness.

If the Turks moved forces to the Caucasus why should we conform? Why hand over the strategic initiative to one's enemy? Strike at his vitals instead. I suggested that my rôle should be a move in the direction of Mosul and the establishment of the Cavalry Division on the Lesser Zab, from whence the whole of the great granary of Turks, the Erbil District, would come under our control.

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But Sir Charles Marling and Dunsterforce, supported by the Eastern Committee, prevailed, and, though for some time the bad weather enabled me to postpone the evil day, I eventually received direct orders to carry out this, in my opinion, mad enterprise.

On receipt of these orders I at once sat down and wrote a letter asking to be allowed to resign my command, which I handed to Williams (Military Secretary) to code for a cable. Then my senior Staff Officers came and asked me to reconsider my decision. The end of it was that I consented to sleep over it and the cable was never sent. After all it is a soldier's business to obey orders, even if those orders seem to him to be wrong; furthermore, to resign in the middle of a war is not quite cricket.

Twice, since I had been in the position of having A.D.C.s, I had asked Jack if he would care to come on my personal staff, but the dear boy had answered that he considered his first duty was to his regiment, and in this I thought him perfectly right. Towards the end of January, however, he wrote that there seemed to be so little prospect for cavalry on the Western Front that he would now like to come to me. Accordingly I cabled to Gillman, then in Egypt, to ask him to apply for the services of Lieutenant John Stephen, 16th Lancers, as A.D.C. I knew that there would be a difficulty, as by this time regular officers had been barred from personal staff appointments. What the result of the application might have been I do not know, because, before any answer was received, the gallant lad was killed during the great German offensive of March 1918, when the cavalry was brought up to act as rear-guard to the retreating and shattered 5th Army.

Early in March General Sir E. Altham, Quarter-master General in India, came to pay us a visit, accom-

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panied by Sir Thomas Holland, Head of the Munitions Board. Sir E. Altham was a delightful personality and most helpful in every way. Sir Thomas Holland I thought somewhat carping in his criticisms. He informed me that India was being bled white by the demands of Mesopotamia, and especially was this the case with regard to railway material and rolling-stock. He had an especial grudge against the MacMunn bridge at Amarah, which he seemed to think had been built solely for the self-glorification of George MacMunn, and was not essential for military purposes. I knew, or thought I knew, that the Indian railways had done remarkably well in off-loading their old rolling-stock on to Mesopotamia and getting a very good price for it from the Imperial Exchequer; I also knew that the Amarah bridge had saved thousands of precious hours since its completion, so I was not particularly impressed by his criticisms. He evidently carried back to India such tales of our reckless expenditure that later in the year a commission, with Sir John Hewitt at the head of it, was sent out to inquire into all such matters. This commission entirely exonerated us from vague charges of extravagance, and justified all that had been done as essential to the conduct of operations and the proper maintenance of the army in Mesopotamia.

Gillman had returned from his mission and, in accordance with the agreement arrived at, the 3rd (Lahore) Division had been withdrawn from the Ist Corps preparatory to being transported to Egypt, the 18th Division being moved up to take its place. Brooking, who had been gradually pressing back the Turks on the Euphrates, occupied Hit and, having established forward bases of supply, was prepared to make a rapid offensive movement. The Turks, who had been

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gradually retreating, had eventually taken up a strong position at Khan Bagdadi, and Brooking set to work to lull them into fancied security with most successful results. Cassels's Cavalry Brigade and the light armoured motor-cars were added to the force at his disposal. These reinforcements, being moved by night and hidden in palm-groves by day, arrived at the scene of action entirely unobserved by the enemy.

On the 25th March, and prior to Brooking's attack, Tennant, head of the Air Force in Mesopotamia, elected to fly from Baghdad over the Turkish position, taking with him Major Hobart, Brigade Major of Edwardes's Brigade of the 3rd Division. Owing to clouds which interfered with observation Tennant flew low, and his machine was brought down by hostile fire. Neither pilot nor passenger was hurt, but both fell into the hands of the Turks and, after being interviewed by the Divisional Commander, were dispatched under escort towards Aleppo.

Cassels, with his brigade and the armoured cars, after a very long and circuitous march, reached the Wadi Hauran, where it crosses the Aleppo road, by 5 p.m. that day and so cut the Turkish line of retreat.

At 5 p.m. Brooking attacked and drove the Turks from their entrenched position. They rapidly retired along the Aleppo road but, failing to break through Cassels's position and being closely followed up by Brooking's infantry, the commander surrendered with his whole force early on the following day. About 5,250 prisoners were taken, together with 12 guns and 47 machine-guns.

But there was no rest for the cavalry and armoured cars which were immediately dispatched along the road to Aleppo to recapture Tennant and Hobart, whilst

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our aeroplanes co-operated in the endeavour to locate their whereabouts. A number of prisoners were picked up in the pursuit, including Preusser, head of the German mission on the Euphrates. The whole line of communications was rapidly rolled up, Haditha, Khan Feheme, and Ana being captured in rapid succession, and in each huge dumps of ammunition were found which our forces destroyed on their return march. The existence of these important dumps seemed to indicate that the Yilderim Army for the recapture of Baghdad had not been a myth, and that the Euphrates line had been selected for its advance.

On the 28th March the armoured cars pursuing beyond Ana achieved the rescue of Tennant and Hobart, who in charge of a Tartar guard had been hurried day in day out towards Aleppo and, when retaken, were some two hundred miles from the place where they had been captured. I was not altogether satisfied that these officers had not been taken prisoner largely through their own fault, so they returned to Baghdad under arrest pending the verdict of a Court of Inquiry. The Court, however, completely exonerated them from blame, so I had nothing more to say and they were at once released from arrest.

Tennant, one of the finest and most intrepid fliers in the Air Force, left shortly after this episode for India, where he got engaged within a very few days and was married almost at once, so that he had the unique experience of being captured twice within a month! Hobart went almost at once to Palestine with his brigade, and during the voyage wrote a most interesting account of his experiences which was later published in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

On the 21st March the political officer at Nejef,

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Captain W. M. Marshall, was foully murdered for no known reason, as he was universally popular with the Arabs. I at once ordered a blockade of the city, and placed Brigadier-General Sanders in charge, with orders to allow no person to enter or leave the city and to cut off the water-supply. This sounds more drastic than it really was, because the city boasted of many wells within its walls, though these were somewhat brackish and unpleasant to the taste.

Captain Balfour was sent to the spot to act as political officer under Sanders. Very shortly we began to discover reasons for the unprovoked murder of Marshall which were traceable to German gold and intrigue. When Preusser was captured on the Euphrates he had with him a diary, but the pages before and after the date of the Nejef murder had been torn out and destroyed. I could not get evidence sufficient to secure his conviction on a capital charge, and he could only be treated as an honourable prisoner of war.

The situation of Nejef was somewhat unique and difficult to deal with, because this city contains, and indeed is built round, one of the most venerated shrines of the Shiah Mohammedans, the tomb and mosque of Ali, and the pilgrimage to Nejef ranks almost as high as one to Mecca. The city itself is surrounded by a wall some forty feet high, and outside the wall is one vast burial-ground with thousands of tombs, some of which are most elaborate. Well-to-do Shiahs from remote parts of Persia and also from India and other parts of the world are sent there to be buried, so that on the day of Resurrection they may enter Paradise close on the heels of the venerated Ali.

Inside the city, a huddled mass of drab mud-coloured houses with cellars dug down two or even three stories

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below ground level, is the gorgeous mosque of Ali with golden domes and minarets and faced with priceless Persian tiles. The Shiahs being much more fanatical than the Sunni Mohammedans, no Christian is allowed inside their mosques, or even into the court-yards thereof, so one can only obtain a cursory glance through the doorways, and even that is looked on with disfavour.

The inhabitants of this curious city situated on the edge of the desert vary in character, from the most devout and venerated teachers of the Koran, the Ulema of the theological college, to the rascals who prey on the pilgrims and the cut-throats of the desert who seek refuge there from the consequences of their misdeeds.

I was determined to punish the instigators and perpetrators of the crime, but how to secure them without actually assaulting and taking the city presented many difficulties. The cordon round the city gradually closed in until our men actually occupied the walls, and then, thanks to the action of the Chief Ulema, all those concerned in the outrage were handed over to us and duly tried by a military Court. As a result eleven were executed, seven sentenced to transportation for life, and a large number of undesirables deported. Balfour, as political officer and go-between, had been invaluable, and carried out his delicate work so tactfully that the inhabitants of Nejef afterwards presented him with a sword of honour in token of their gratitude.

When the matter had been settled, I paid a visit to Nejef, and was received with every mark of respect. Some of these were, I must admit, unpleasant; thus, on entering the main gate, two sheep were suddenly produced and their throats cut under my feet. I was conducted to the house of the Khillidar (the keeper of the sacred treasure), where the Ulema, the notables

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of the city, and the sheikhs of the surrounding district, had been assembled to pay their respects to me as representative of the British Government. The large court-yard of the Khillidar's house, where the reception took place, was carpeted and hung all round with Persian rugs, which I regarded with much interest, but out of the hundreds of rugs thus displayed I only saw two or three which I thought really good. All the same, I believe the Treasure of Jewellery, Persian works of art, and rugs belonging to the mosque, is of immense value. I shook hands with each one of the assembled company, and then we were seated at a long table laden with cakes, fruit, and sweetmeats. After we had partaken of refreshments, speeches were made by the Khillidar, the Chief Ulema and others, the gist of them being gratitude for our methods of exacting retributive justice and vows of loyalty to the British Government. To these speeches I made a suitable reply, and then we took our leave.

The following day I went by motor to the holy city of Kerbela, which contains the mosque and tomb of Hussein. Unlike Nejef, this is an open town with more cultivated surroundings and up-to-date buildings, such as a hospital which was in evidence even if not in use. Some two miles from the town we were met by a number of Arab sheikhs mounted on lovely Arab mares, each with its attendant foal. This party, after greetings, attended us as escort into Kerbela, galloping wildly round the motor which we purposely slowed down; the jolly little foals got knocked down occasionally, though seemingly no worse for their falls and evidently enjoying the fun. Here again notables and sheikhs had been assembled to greet me, but the atmosphere was different from that of Nejef, and though the speeches

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expressed loyalty to the British, I thought they lacked spontaneity and enthusiasm.

Another commission arrived in Mesopotamia about the end of March, at the head of which was General Freeland (agent of the Bombay, Baroda, and Central Indian Railway). This commission gave some useful advice as to the lay-out of the railway terminus at Basra, and eventually left behind a so-called Director-General of Transportation, who was not wanted. Beyond evolving what I thought perfectly mad schemes for hauling and lowering trains up and down precipices when drawing up plans for running a railway through Persia, I do not think that he achieved anything. There were altogether too many conferences and commissions and, I may add, too many so-called " super-men " during the war.

In March I had a letter from the Viceroy asking if I had any objection to Lady Chelmsford and himself making a visit to Mesopotamia, to which I replied that they would be warmly welcomed. Their son in the Royal Artillery had been killed during the operations on the Adhaim, and they naturally wanted to visit his grave. To my great regret the British Government refused permission for this visit, though from the political standpoint the decision was probably a wise one. It is difficult for a man holding the great position of Viceroy of India to divest himself of the pomp and circumstance of his office, and the Arabs could easily have put a political construction on his visit which it might have been hard to combat.

To celebrate the first anniversary of our capture of Baghdad, we determined to have a week of festivities, and in order that all ranks and formations should participate we arranged for a two days' race-meeting as well as tournaments in all the usual games; Polo, Football,

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Hockey, Cricket, Tennis, Golf, and Tent-pegging—all these being played off at the Baghdad Sporting Club. In the evening the attractions were concerts and a boxing tournament. All this entailed a vast amount of preparation and care, most of the work falling on Carter, who rose nobly to the occasion, and to him was mostly due the great success of the "Baghdad Week."

We, G.H.Q., entered a team for the polo tournament, consisting of Beach, Williams, Gillman and myself as 1, 2, 3 and back respectively. Unfortunately we drew the ultimate winners (14th Lancers) in the first round and were beaten by 3 goals to 2. We had special events for Arabs in the races, but the entries were not particularly good, because I think they had got it into their heads that if they brought in their ponies we should commandeer them. Besides, I fancy that they had never been educated up to racing, and did not understand a race of anything less than fourteen miles.

Very shortly after assuming command I had started a scheme of soldiers' clubs, and as the Y.M.C.A. was in the best position to give effect to my ideas, I interviewed the head of this organization, and asked him if he was prepared to turn his present centres into real clubs with recreational facilities. He readily agreed, and I then made two stipulations: first that, although a prayer room should be in existence at these centres, religion should not be forced on the men (as I crudely put it, a man should not be obliged to sing a hymn before he could have a glass of lemonade); secondly, that all profits accruing from these clubs should be expended for the benefit of the men in Mesopotamia. He agreed to both these conditions.

The various organizations which had done so much for the men of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force

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were then asked if they would be kind enough to alter the nature of their gifts and substitute requisites for games in place of clothing, tobacco, and foodstuffs, because all these articles could now be purchased from the well-organized Field Force Canteens. This suggestion they were good enough to adopt. In addition, a Bombay firm was induced by promises of preferential treatment to open a shop in Baghdad for the sale of sports gear. The public gardens on the river-bank in Baghdad were handed over to the Y.M.C.A. to form a Soldiers' Club, and in addition we made there a most successful theatre and cinema, the stage and dressing-rooms of which were covered in, whilst the auditorium, though enclosed, was left open to the sky. This theatre proved an enormous success, and was packed nightly with enthusiastic audiences.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE PERSIAN ADVENTURE

EARLY in 1918 Percy Cox was ordered home for a consultation, and his place was taken by Colonel A. T. Wilson, who had been working under him as a sort of second in command. A. T. was one of the hardest workers I have ever met, besides being an extremely clever and able man, yet somehow he never gained the confidence of the Arabs to the extent that Cox had done ; probably it was that he lacked Cox's patient methods. Nevertheless, he filled the position of Civil Commissioner, which was becoming more and more arduous and important, with consummate ability. In his task he was ably assisted by Miss Gertrude Bell, in whom the Arabs knew they had a friend to whom they could confidently appeal when in perplexity or trouble. The assistant political officers had been chosen with great care, and I had every reason to congratulate myself that the civil administration of the occupied territory was being carried out on sound and sympathetic lines.

Early in April we had the honour of a visit from Lord and Lady Willingdon, which was a source of pleasure to the whole army. Throughout the history of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force they had left nothing undone for the comfort and well-being of officers, nursing sisters and men of that force, and it was later unanimously decided to present them with portraits of themselves to be executed by artists of their own choice, as some slight token of appreciation and gratitude.

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Lord Willingdon had had a bad fall when hunting with the Bombay hounds, and was suffering from the effects of concussion, for which his medical adviser recommended a sea voyage. Having heard from Colonel St. John, Embarkation Officer at Bombay, that they were coming to Basra, I pressed them to extend their journey as far as Baghdad, and I sent K. O. Goldie to meet the party and conduct them up the river. They were ideal guests and during their all too short stay thoroughly enjoyed themselves; at all events, they gave us that impression. They went to stay a night with Brooking, and were taken over the scenes of his recent victories. He was an admirable cicerone, and Willingdon told me that he had been immensely interested in all he had seen; even the trenches had thrilled him. Brooking returned with the Willingdon party to Baghdad, and gave a lecture to a crowded audience, in the new theatre, on his recent successful operations on the Euphrates, to which the whole audience listened with much enjoyment.

Both Lord and Lady Willingdon took a great interest in the hospitals, and to follow them through the various wards was an object-lesson in how one should visit the sick; a cheery word and a smile for all the patients left them feeling as though a ray of sunshine had passed through. Lady Willingdon was a great advocate for having sisters in charge in the Indian Hospitals, the system in vogue in all the big civil hospitals in India, but entirely foreign to old-fashioned army ideas. I promised to give it a trial, and it proved such a success that even the Director of Medical Services became an enthusiastic convert, and the system was finally adopted in all the Indian hospitals, where it led to greater cleanliness and more efficient care of the sick and wounded sepoys.

We made an expedition to Hillah, now being organized

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as the collecting centre for the harvest produced by the agricultural development scheme, where we were entertained by the Directorate of Local Resources. Here we saw all the arrangements for threshing and winnowing the grain and putting it into sacks for conveyance by rail to Baghdad. One of the side-shows of the scheme was a large chicken-farm organized and managed by Captain Ezra, a wealthy merchant of Calcutta, who was immensely keen on making a success of it. The farm was started to supply hospitals with chickens and eggs instead of having to import them; he had some 20,000 birds of all ages, from day-old chicks to laying hens, and these were being fed from the winnowings of the grain, and thus cost nothing to maintain.

I had asked Gertrude Bell to join the party, and in her we had the most interesting and efficient guide possible for our visit the next day to the site of ancient Babylon. A party of German archæologists had been at work there for years and laid bare most of the foundations, so that with Gertrude's intimate knowledge of the history of Babylon as well as her archæological genius she was able to reconstruct the palace of Nebuchadnezzar for our imaginations. One of the things which interested me very much was to note the wonderful lasting and preservative qualities of bitumen. The huge Babylonian bricks, really made of a form of concrete and each stamped with the name of the then mighty king "Nabuchodnasor the son of Nabu Polasor," were laid in bitumen with reed matting, still well preserved, between each brick. The rooms of the palace seem to have been of small dimensions, but presumably if a man has some hundreds of wives he must cut down expenses somehow.

Other points of interest in the near neighbourhood visited were "Birs Nimrud," which some people aver was

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the Tower of Babel (and others entirely disagree with them), and the great Hindiyeh Barrage. Late in the afternoon we went in a launch down the river below Hillah, the banks still fringed with willows as in the time when the Israelites in their captivity "wept by the waters of Babylon." During our return to Baghdad on the following day we passed the mound where Alexander the Great died, whilst still a young man, after having conquered most of the then known world.

Such sights as there were in Baghdad and neighbourhood were not neglected, for instance the old portion of the Citadel, the covered Bazaars, the Sunni Mosque of Abdul Kadir, where we met the venerable and greatly respected Naqib of Baghdad, another Sunni Mosque at Muadhem, the Baghdad Sporting Club, and the beautiful Shiah Mosque at Kazimain, though that we could not enter.

We motored down to see the ruins of Ctesiphon with its wonderful arch, and returned home by river in a *glisseur*, at a speed of about forty miles an hour, Lady Willingdon having whispered to the driver to go as fast as he could. On his return journey, Lord Willingdon left Baghdad by river accompanied by Rigby, his doctor, and Greenway, his Military Secretary, but Lady Willingdon and an A.D.C. remained for one more day, as she particularly wanted to go out to Baqubah to see Raleigh Egerton and his Corps Headquarters camp there. She then caught the train at night to Kut, and reached that place some time before Lord Willingdon's boat could do so. Largely as a result of their visit a club and hostel for nursing sisters was acquired and furnished, as well as an hostel for the convenience of officers from out-stations who might have to spend a night or two in Baghdad.

Although I was not in a position to send troops into

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Persia for the time being, it was incumbent on me to make all preparations for safeguarding the route when the weather became favourable enough to render this possible. The Sinjabis, a tribe whose country impinged on the Tak-i-Girra and whose chief was in German pay, were inclined to prove troublesome, so, having learnt that a confederation of other tribes wished to take action against them, I thought the simplest plan was to support their enemies. A small column of all arms and a couple of aeroplanes were sent to co-operate with the Confederation. The Sinjabis were completely defeated, their chief wounded, and large numbers of their animals captured. This was safeguard No. 1.

The next item in the programme was to clear the Turks, bag and baggage, out of the triangle formed by Kara Tepe, Kifri, and Tuz Khurmatli, and this I issued orders to Egerton to carry out. In addition to his own Corps Holland-Pryor's Cavalry Brigade was placed at his disposal, and Cobbe was ordered to co-operate to the extent of sending a small column up the Adhaim to induce the Turks to continue to hold their position at Abu Ghuraib, and also by demonstrations to pin the enemy forces on the Tigris down to their present positions. By the morning of 26th April Egerton had deployed his forces and that night the various columns moved on their objectives. Despite torrential rain, inky darkness, and flooded streams, all columns reached their destinations at daybreak on the 27th.

The Turks, however, had at last taken alarm, and too late attempted to retreat via Taza Khurmatli and Kirkuk to the Lesser Zab. Holland-Pryor carried out his task with great dash and tactical skill, cutting the enemy's line of retreat, and then making a most successful charge which accounted for large numbers of Turks

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both in killed and prisoners. Kifri was taken with no opposition, and then Cayley, with O'Dowda's and Lewin's brigades, attacked and captured the strongly defended Turkish position at Tuz Khurmatli, the brunt of the fighting falling on O'Dowda's brigade. The total enemy casualties in killed, wounded, and prisoners during these operations fell not far short of 3,000, numerous guns and machine guns were also captured. This was safeguard No. 2.

The task I had set Egerton had been carried out with the utmost dash and determination on the part of the troops engaged, in spite of the most inclement weather, and tactical skill of a high order on the part of the Commanders.

My report on the operations to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff brought an answer in the shape of an order to continue the pressure and capture Kirkuk. This new objective being 130 miles distant from railhead, due preparation was required to deal with the supply situation; but on the 5th May, in spite of the weather, which remained consistently bad, a reconnaissance pushed forward, encountered the Turkish rear-guard near Taza Khurmatli. The enemy withdrew that night, and our advanced troops occupied this place.

By the 7th, after very long and arduous marches, our troops occupied Kirkuk, whilst the Turks, closely followed up by our cavalry, withdrew across the Lesser Zab. Kirkuk, which may be said to be the chief town of Kurdistan, was in a filthy state, and some 600 sick and wounded Turkish soldiers found in hospital there were in a deplorably neglected condition.

I was now ordered to hold Kirkuk and occupy Sulimaniyeh, but this was too much altogether. To

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carry out the order would have required a large number of troops, and with the enormous amount of transport earmarked for the Persian L. of C. and the collection of the harvest at Hillah I was being asked to perform impossibilities. I intimated that it would not be feasible to garrison Sulimaniyeh, but that, for the time being, I would continue to hold Kirkuk. I did so, with a very mobile force, for about a fortnight, but the difficulties of supply were so great and the danger of the detached force being cut off and surrounded was so probable, that I determined to withdraw to Tuz Khurmatli.

The late Lord Salisbury spoke strongly about the danger of small-scale maps, and sometimes I could not help thinking that the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet must have provided themselves with those of a particularly small scale. It is feasible to raid with a big force up to even 200 miles away from rail or river-head, but quite impossible to maintain a large number of troops at such a distance for any length of time; indeed, with only roads to rely on, thirty miles is about the limit. And yet I was calmly being ordered to send a large body of troops up to the Caspian, 700 miles of mountainous road, and occupy Kirkuk and Sulimaniyeh, another 200 miles of unmetalled road, in addition to my already enormous length of communications up the Karun, Tigris, Euphrates, and Dyalah rivers; I was quite prepared to push railways forward, but such work cannot be done in a day, and demands on India for further railway material for permanent way and rolling-stock were received with either pained surprise or a non-possumus attitude.

A railway was being rapidly laid to Hillah for the purpose of bringing the grain and forage from that

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collecting centre of local supply to Baghdad, and the late German railway had been pushed forward from its original railhead at Istabulat as far as Tekrit. But when extra material was required to complete the last twelve miles, India at once objected to any extension at all, though eventually the material was sent under protest. But for this extension the final forward move on Mosul could never have taken place.

Towards the end of May the passes into Persia were clear of snow, and I had no longer any excuse for not starting the invasion, though I had hoped against hope for the cancellation of the project. The Russian Army had entirely disintegrated, and Bicharakov, together with Dunsterforce, had moved up to Kasvin, so that troops from Mesopotamia would have to get there rapidly to be of any use. The best I could do was to send up half a battalion of Gurkhas in Ford vans, feeling sure that even this small force would be able to deal with the Jangalis. This party, by dint of hauling their vans over the worst of the passes and pushing them through the mud of the valleys, reached Kasvin in an incredibly short time, and there came under command of Dunsterville.

Dunsterforce as a special mission was now at an end. It was placed under my orders, and Dunsterville himself became G.O.C. troops in Persia. The L. of C. now had to be formed, and echelons of troops pushed forward through Kermanshah and Hamadan to Enzeli. Colonel Capper took charge of the supply arrangements and the formation of depots along the whole route, not only for foodstuffs but also for petrol and spare parts for the now endless procession of motor-vehicles. Gangs of Persians were employed in making the road and keeping it in some sort of order, and these all had to be

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supplied with food in addition to the troops. Bicharakov moved from Kasvin towards Enzeli, accompanied by the armoured cars of Dunsterforce and a small British detachment.

On arrival at Mandzil, where there is a bridge over a deep ravine, the force found itself opposed by Kuchik Khan and his Jangalis, with whom were some German officers. Bicharakov attacked, drove the enemy out of his position, and pushed on towards Resht and Enzeli. This small and unimportant action somewhat detracted from the exaggerated opinion held of the bogey-man of Teheran, and exposed the absurdity of sending two British divisions to deal with such a contemptible opponent. Some time later Kuchik Khan attacked a small British detachment at Resht, and in the street fighting which occurred about 100 Jangalis were killed, after which he gave us no further trouble.

During the month of June, detachments were sent to Bijar and Mianeh to act as flank-guards on the west of our weak and lengthy line of communication through Persia. The road to Urmia runs through the former place, and in that district the Assyrians, Nestorians, and Jelus had been making a stout resistance to the Turkish forces during the early summer. We established communication with these tribes early in July, and they requested assistance in the shape of ammunition, machine guns, and money, offering to meet and take these over at Sain Kaleh on the 23rd July. The convoy was duly dispatched under escort of the 14th Hussars, but the tribes were late at the rendezvous, and when most of the fighting men were absent the Turks attacked Urmia, driving out the Assyrian and Jelu families, massacring many, and following up the fleeing crowds of old men, women, and children, encumbered with herds

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of cattle until checked by our men. The survivors to the number of some 50,000 poured along the roadside into Bijar and thence to Hamadan, from which place they were sent down in batches of 3,000 at a time to Baqubah, where an enormous camp was hastily prepared for their accommodation. The mass of homeless and starving people had to be fed *en route*, and our supply depots which had been filled up with so much labour were soon exhausted. I suppose that from the humanitarian point of view one could not do less than we did, but what these refugees eventually cost the British tax-payer I would be afraid to say. We are an altruistic nation, and this was one of the penalties we had to pay for the ill-advised Persian venture.

In June, I had made a partial inspection of the Persian L. of C., but owing to pressure of work, I was unable to get much beyond Kermanshah. The country is very interesting and in the spring the wild flowers are, I believe, wonderful. But it was then too late ; the country was drying up and only masses of wild hollyhocks and blue thistles were in evidence to give colour to the scenery. I thought that Capper had done wonders in the organization of supply and in this work had been most ably assisted by Colonel Moens.

Bicharakov eventually left Enzeli with his Partisanskis on 3rd July, having previously accepted the post of the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army in the Caucasus. The Government at Baku was then Bolshevik and strongly opposed to British intervention, but though the Russians, whether Bolshevik or Tsarist, wanted to keep control of it on account of the rich oil-fields, there was little organization and no troops, except those of Bicharakov, on whom dependence could be placed.

Then a *coup d'état* took place and the Bolshevik

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Government was succeeded by a Centro-Caspian Dictatorship. Under the new arrangement there were, I believe, many dictators, but they were sufficiently agreed to want British troops for the purpose of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Bicharakov, though he himself realized that the fall of the town was imminent and left it with his force, which quite wrongly now included the armoured cars of Dunsterforce, urged Dunsterville to comply with this request. Very little reliable information as to these happenings, or what the real situation was, had reached G.H.Q. at Baghdad. When Dunsterville, over whom Bicharakov seems to have had great influence, asked to be allowed to take a brigade to Baku, he was informed that he himself should go there first with a small escort and see for himself what the situation was and report accordingly to G.H.Q.

Cobbe had been given leave to England and about the middle of July I was granted a month's leave in India. But just before I was leaving, Colonel Rawlinson arrived, bringing a letter to me from his brother, General Sir H. Rawlinson, in which he asked me to employ him in any way in which he could be useful, so that he was sent off to join Dunsterville's staff. Carter went home on leave and Neilson accompanied me to India.

The Willingdons had with their usual kindness insisted on us going to stay with them at Government House (Ganeshkhind) near Poona, and on arrival at Bombay we were met by Her Excellency who had a portion of Government House opened there for our special benefit. Sir Charles Monro had also been good enough to ask me to stay with him at Simla, and H.E. The Viceroy desired that I should visit him at Vice-regal Lodge at the

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same place. Thanks to Lady Willingdon, Neilson and I travelled to Simla in the greatest comfort and stayed a few days at Vice-regal Lodge. Amongst other guests there, we met Colonel Roos-Keppel, Commissioner of the North-West Frontier, who had a great reputation in the turbulent and debatable land which he now governed but—well, I had been at a crammer's with him, and the boy is father to the man—so he did not impress me.

Percy Cox was also in Simla, so that Lord Chelmsford took the opportunity to hold conferences on the general situation. At one of these I ventured to express my views on the subject of the Persian adventure, but India, always sensitive about her frontier, had made up her mind that a Turco-German drive through Persia and Afghanistan against her border was imminent, and that the troops of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force must be prepared to check this at all and every cost. The only person who agreed with my views was Sir Hamilton Grant, the Foreign Secretary.

Some two days after my arrival, Lord Chelmsford asked me to come to his room before dinner and there showed me a cable from Lord Curzon. This informed him that Sir Charles Marling was being called home from Teheran for a consultation, and asked whether Percy Cox could be spared from Mesopotamia to take his place as Minister there as a temporary measure. I at once agreed to spare Sir Percy for such a purpose, and though His Excellency offered to send Sir Henry Dobbs to Mesopotamia in his stead, I thought it only fair that A. T. Wilson, who had done so well during Cox's absence at home, should continue to act for him.

Both Lord and Lady Chelmsford were kindness

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itself during my short stay, and though it was quite evident that the death of their gallant son had saddened them both (whilst his anxieties and responsibilities must have been immense), they were carrying out the duties of their high position in a most laudable manner. To Lady Chelmsford we, in Mesopotamia, owed much gratitude for her devoted work in managing the Indian Comforts Fund. After leaving Vice-regal Lodge we went to stay for a few days with Sir Charles and Lady Monro, who were charming hosts. I had never met Lady Monro before, but after a short acquaintance I was quite ready to fall in with the general verdict that she was the most universally popular person in India.

Fanshawe was acting for me as G.O.C.-in-C. in Mesopotamia, but Gillman kept me informed about the progress of events in Persia so that, although on leave, I could still keep a finger on the reins. We left Simla after about a week and travelled via Bombay to Kirkee, the station for Ganeshkhind, and proceeded to Government House. There I spent the most ideal holiday and, though quite physically fit, I was extremely glad of a complete rest from the cares of office. If the Willingdons had been charming as guests, they were even more so as hosts. Those staying in the house were allowed the most perfect liberty to do exactly what they wanted and were helped to do it. We played golf, hunted with the Poona hounds, attended the races, danced after dinner, played bridge and ping-pong, met interesting people and altogether had a wonderful time. Poona was full of soldiers on leave from Mesopotamia, and everything possible had been devised to give them a good time.

A very popular item was that one day in the week an "at home" was given for all British soldiers, who

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cared to avail themselves of the privilege, at Government House when the band played, the gardens, grounds and even the house were thrown open, refreshments provided and their Excellencies went about amongst their guests and chatted to the men in the most natural and friendly manner.

All good times have an ending and, though our leave had been extended for a week, at the end of August we arrived back at Basra, where I had arranged to meet all the local notables, including our friend and ally the Sheikh of Mohammerah, who, since the inception of the campaign, had proved himself to be most loyal and helpful to the British Forces. In contradistinction to the previous year the weather during the latter part of July and the whole of August had, thanks to the beneficent "Shamal" (north wind), remained comparatively cool, cases of heat-stroke had been rare and, I was thankful to find, the hospitals comparatively empty.

On arrival at Baghdad I found the situation in Persia to be as follows:

Dunsterville was in Baku with his staff, some details and the whole of Andrus's Brigade of the 13th Division, whilst a Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment was at Krasnovodsk, a port on the Eastern shore of the Caspian. It will be remembered that Dunsterville had been permitted to go to Baku with a small personal escort to report on the situation there. The Dictators evidently promised much, and he reported that if he had a Brigade of British troops there was every prospect of saving the town from the Turks. He was therefore permitted to have the 39th Brigade on condition that the necessary shipping for conveyance of the troops should be entirely at his disposal, and under his control.

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I must here interpolate that early in July a private and personal cable from Sir Henry Wilson warned me that the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet thought I was not very zealous in carrying out their ideas and asked me to keep out of my communiqués anything which might indicate an unwillingness to do so. I thanked him in a personal letter for his kindly advice, and freely confessed that, although they were wrong in thinking I was not doing my best once the die was cast, I hated the whole business. I said that the only parallel to an attempt to operate on a large scale at the end of 700 miles of road was Napoleon's Moscow campaign and that could hardly be called an unqualified success.

The British Brigade having reached Baku, the Russians and Armenians rejoiced exceedingly that someone else had arrived to do the fighting for them. The Turkish forces were holding dominating positions on the hills; in fact, unless our small brigade was strongly supported, the capture of the town was a foregone conclusion.

Dunsterville time and again urged this on the Dictators who promised much and did nothing. Whenever the Turks launched a fresh attack, the Armenian and Russian Troops retired, giving up key positions and leaving our troops, who, as always, made a most heroic stand, in the lurch. Dunsterville urged that another brigade should be sent to reinforce him, but to my mind the situation was now such that we had better save what we could. Dunsterville was therefore ordered to withdraw and leave Baku to its fate.

I duly reported my decision, and in answer was told to destroy the oil-wells before withdrawal. I had never seen Baku, but I did know that it contained some 2,000 oil-wells, each about 500 feet deep and protected

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by ferro-concrete and asbestos coverings, and how many tons of high explosive would have been required to blow them all up is a question I did not enter into. The inhabitants of Baku may not have had much stomach to fight against the Turks, but one can hardly imagine that they would have looked on, with their hands in their pockets, whilst a few British troops went about blowing their means of livelihood sky-high.

Dunsterville withdrew his troops and embarked them without any untoward incident and the ships carrying the force, having put out all lights, ran the gauntlet of the Bolshevik war-ships, lying near the harbour exit, without discovery or mishap. To this an exception must be made because the last vessel to leave was one in which Colonel Rawlinson had stowed most of the contents of the arsenal, and this was fired on by the guard-ship. Luckily the vessel was not hit and the captain, with Rawlinson's revolver at his head, continued on his course. All arrived safely at Enzeli much to my relief. Dunsterville now went home and his place as G.O.C. Troops in Persia was taken by Thomson with Digby Shuttleworth as his G.S.O.1. Fraser then succeeded Thomson as G.O.C. 14th Division.

The enormous refugee camp at Baqubah was now commanded and organized by Austin, and a comparatively large staff was required for the purpose as well as hospitals and schools. The able-bodied men were formed into battalions and underwent a course of training to fit them eventually to assist in their own repatriation. The most likeable portion of these refugees were the Assyrians, the small remnant of that once great nation which had conquered Babylonia and led the Jews into captivity there. They were Christians of the Chaldean sect, and their leader and chief priest was called "The Mar

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Shimoen " (Father Simeon). This office is semi-hereditary ; it remains in the same family, but descends not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew, because the holder of it must be celibate. A very interesting personality was the sister of " The Mar Shimeon," known as the Lady Surma. This lady, who, until the present world upheaval, had never left the little mountain village where she was born, talked English perfectly and had a good general knowledge of the affairs of the world.

The only people in the camp who gave any trouble were the Armenians and eventually that battalion had to have its rifles taken away from it. We had other Armenian refugees in Baghdad itself, but these were all girls, the sole survivors of the vast numbers of people deported from Armenia by the order of Talaat, and driven remorselessly into the desert to die of hunger and thirst if not at the hands of Kurds and Bedus. The girls had been saved by the Arabs and eventually handed over to our keeping.

Sir Charles and Lady Marling with their family and the Grand Duke Dimitri of Russia came down to Baghdad from Teheran and stayed with us until all their baggage could be brought down, after which they proceeded home via Bombay. Dimitri had been exiled to Persia by the Czar on account of his complicity in the death (murder) of the infamous Rasputin, and one night during his stay he told us the story—it was not a pleasing one ! Later, General Baratoff and his staff arrived and as, owing to the revolution, he was unable to return to Russia and was not wanted at Teheran, I managed to arrange with Sir Charles Monro that he and his staff, or some of them, should go to India. On saying good-bye to us, he seized Gillman and, before Gillman was aware of his intention, kissed him on both cheeks. I confess to being much

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relieved that he had not taken such a violent fancy to me.

With Cox at Teheran and Thomson in command of the troops, a different complexion was put on the Persian situation and my anxieties and troubles practically disappeared.

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CHAPTER XIX

MOSUL AND PEACE

ALTHOUGH Baku had been abandoned, and the Turkish forces under Nuri Pasha were now in possession of that town and district, we were determined to get and keep control of the Caspian sea itself. To this end, Commodore Norris and Captain Washington, R.N., were sent by the Admiralty to Enzeli in order to acquire ships. These officers were followed by naval personnel, whilst six-inch guns and mountings, ammunition and armour plating were conveyed by motor lorries over the 700 miles of mountainous road separating Enzeli from Baghdad.

Norris met with a serious accident which would have debarred most men from carrying out his mission; but by the time the ships acquired had been turned into passable imitations of cruisers he was about again and hoisted his flag in what was probably the most curious naval command in the world. Krasnovodsk, garrisoned by the 1/4 Hampshires, was retained, and its dockyard was thus available for the new Caspian Navy.

There had been many changes in the Army in Mesopotamia. I had, soon after assuming command, abolished the Cavalry Division as being too cumbrous a formation for my purposes, and Jones, the Divisional General, had joined G.H.Q. as Cavalry adviser. The thirteen-pounders of the R.H.A. had been relegated to L. of C. and their place taken by eighteen-pounders, for which an extra pair of horses per gun was allotted. The

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thirteen-pounder gun had always struck me as a very moderate weapon, having neither sufficient range nor killing power; and cavalry especially should be supported by a long ranging gun.

In addition to sending two divisions to Palestine, one Indian Battalion was taken from each Brigade for dispatch to Salonika and one company from each of the remaining battalions was sent to India as the nucleus of a new formation. The men thus taken away were replaced by new formations and drafts from India, where recruiting had become intensive, and they were rapidly absorbed. British non-commissioned officers sent as instructors to Indian units proved an enormous success and "Sergeant What's-his-name," as always, worked wonders with the raw material.

A. T. Wilson brought into Baghdad a large posse of the most important Sheikhs in the Baghdad Vilayet and a reception was held for them in the Soldiers' Club gardens, where I bade them welcome on behalf of the British Government. During their stay they were shown the model farm—we had started both an agricultural as well as irrigation Directorate—the cotton experimental cultivation, the Remount Depot and various classes of military engines of destruction such as guns, howitzers, armoured cars and aeroplanes. I trust they were duly impressed, but an Arab is a stoical being and, though perhaps inwardly thrilled by an ascent in an aeroplane, he would scorn to shew his feelings outwardly.

As we did not know how long the war might last, nor when the submarine menace might become even more deadly, the agricultural development scheme was being extended to districts other than the Euphrates area. The many canals taking off from the Dyalah were taken in hand by the Irrigation Directorate, and a new regulator

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was installed to get a better head of water so that many more acres could be brought under cultivation for the benefit of the force. Our cotton experiments tended to show that Mesopotamian soil and climate were capable of producing an even higher class of cotton and a heavier yield per acre than Egypt. We had experimented for some time with crude oil as a substitute for wood for cooking purposes, and now we were almost independent of wood fuel, which all had to be imported from India. We were gradually becoming more self-contained and independent of over-seas supplies. For instance, we now manufactured our own soap, a small matter but only one of many other activities for the saving of shipping.

In September an American Mission, styling itself "The Persian Famine Relief Commission," arrived in Baghdad, and I received instructions to give it every assistance. I did so of course, though quite convinced that oil and not famine relief was the *main* objective of the mission. Some few of the members thereof did really help to fight the famine, but the leaders, having been sent up into Persia, entered into negotiations with the Government and eventually secured concessions in the North-West on behalf of the Standard Oil Company. There can be little doubt that oil is, or rather the great oil-trusts are, the cause of much trouble, jealousies and bickering in the present-day world, the state of Mexico being a glaring example of what I mean. Mesopotamia is most certainly rich in oil, how rich, time alone will show, but throughout the Baghdad and Mosul Vilayets vast oil deposits are indicated. Whilst on this subject I recall a remark made to me in London in 1919:—"That whilst one could freely discuss the possibilities of cotton-growing in Mesopotamia with Government officials, the

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bare mention of the word 'oil' at once created a chilly atmosphere."

We had got into touch with the tribes of the Jebel Sinjar during the summer, and by their aid a few prisoners who had managed to escape from the Turks reached Baghdad in safety and were able to furnish our Intelligence with a certain amount of valuable information. The Jebel Sinjar tribes are known as devil worshippers. From what I could make out, they believe that Beelzebub is a son of God, but that, owing to disobedience to the supreme deity, he was banished from heaven for a space of time. They are, however, convinced that he will eventually be re-instated and then his faithful adherents, who have continued to worship him during his temporary adversity, will be greatly honoured and rewarded in paradise. I will not vouch for the strict accuracy of this statement of their belief; but it more or less represents their views.

During September we had a welcome visit from the Bishop of Lahore, a most charming man. Unfortunately the weather was very hot and the Bishop was so strenuous in the performance of his many duties that he broke down and had to be sent to hospital. However, he soon recovered and got safely back to India after having done much good work amongst the whole force.

The rough roads of the Persian Lines of Communication were eating up motor transport at an alarming rate, and even our large repair depots working at high pressure could hardly keep pace with the demands made on them. When, therefore, on the 7th October I received a cable instructing me to gain all the ground possible towards Mosul, the transport difficulty became a very serious one. Troops not required for the immediate offensive had to be brought back nearer to rail or river so that they could

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be fed by their first line transport, their second line then being taken away to form supply columns. Even with such expedients, transport would still be deficient and Cobbe, whose Corps was detailed for the main operation, had to form advanced supply depots north of his main position at Tekrit, thus warning the enemy of an impending attack from that direction. I have already mentioned the extension of the Baghdad railway as far as Tekrit which had been so vehemently opposed by India and which now made an advance on Mosul a feasible proposition. True, it was not the line I should have selected had I had any choice in the matter, but transport, or the lack of it, dominated the situation.

The task confronting Cobbe was a serious one. He had to advance against the Turkish position at Fathah, of which the enemy had now been in occupation for over a year, and the defences of which, both natural and artificial, were formidable, with a force most of which had had no previous experience of war. An outbreak of influenza just at this time was also a serious handicap, and special camps had to be formed for the sufferers in order to clear the field hospitals. The outbreak, curiously enough, died down as soon as ever operations started on the 23rd October. In addition to the 17th and 18th Divisions (Leslie and Fanshawe) of his own Corps, Norton's and Cassels's Cavalry Brigades, the Light Armoured Motor Batteries and two Squadrons of the R.A.F. were placed at Cobbe's disposal. As a flank-guard for the protection of the main operation a mixed force under Lewin was detailed to operate along the line Tuz Khurmatli—Tauk—Taza Khurmatli—Kirkuk—Altun Keupri.

On the afternoon of the 23rd a column from Fanshawe's Division, which was operating on the left bank, pushed forward along the heights of the Jebel Hamrin against

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the left flank of the Turkish position, whilst Norton, with his brigade, moved round north of this range to outflank the enemy. Lewin at the same time reached Taza Khurmatli. These outflanking movements caused the Turks to abandon their strong position at the Fathah Gorge before daybreak on the 24th. Cassels, who had moved to Ain Nakhaila on the 23rd, reached Utmaniyeh on the Lesser Zab River about 3 p.m. on the following day after a forty-five-mile march through a waterless country. There, though he found his crossing opposed by a force of about 800 men with four guns, he forced a passage over a deep ford with surprisingly few casualties and gained the right bank. The Light Armoured Motor Brigade, under command of Thompson, moved out into the desert to El Hadr, some sixty miles west of Shergat, to establish a base there for operations against the Turkish communications with Mosul.

The roads through the Fathah Gorge (on both banks) had been blown into the river by the Turkish rear-guard, and new roads had to be cut out of the sides of the hills. This took time, and it was impossible to get guns forward to assist the infantry of the 17th and 18th Divisions which, under great difficulties of terrain, were closely following up the retreating Turkish forces. Luckily Norton, from his forward position, was able to co-operate with his artillery, and the R.A.F. squadrons with low-flying machines put in much useful work.

Cassels, who on the 25th was engaged in ferrying his transport across the Lesser Zab, sent a force down that river, whilst Norton and the leading Infantry Brigade (Sanders) of the 18th Division forced a crossing near its confluence with the Tigris. These two movements compelled the Turkish forces on the left bank (except those opposed to Lewin) to retire to the right bank and destroy

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their bridge at El Humr. Lewin, by hard fighting during the day, had occupied Kirkuk.

The 17th Division, in spite of all difficulties of terrain, lack of water, and of support from its own artillery, pushed steadily on until it came up against the strong enemy position at El Humr on the evening of the 25th, and here it was held in check until artillery support could be brought up.

On the 26th Cassels started from Utmaniyeh at an early hour, and after a fifty-mile march reached the Tigris opposite Hadraniyeh, where there was reported to be a ford. This was discovered at 3.30 p.m. and proved to be just passable, though one of the three channels to be crossed was nearly five feet deep. The leading regiment, having got safely over, at once galloped to seize the Huwaish Gorge some five miles down-stream, and by the morning of the 27th the whole force was across and had taken up a strong position blocking the road to Mosul.

On the right bank of the river the armoured motors had, by an enormous detour, also got behind the Turkish forces and cut the telegraph line, thus isolating them from their Army Headquarters. The 17th Division, having ejected the enemy from his position at El Humr by the evening of the 26th, continued its laborious advance over a broken, arid, and waterless country, both men and animals suffering greatly from thirst, short rations, and fatigue.

At midday on the 28th October the division closed with the Turkish rear-guard, which was holding an entrenched position covering Shergat (the ancient Asshur, the capital of the once all-powerful Assyrian nation). This position was at once assaulted and carried, over 200 prisoners and many machine guns being captured. Then

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the exhausted men and animals of the division had to be withdrawn to the river for water, and the Turks were able to concentrate in a strong natural position some six miles south of Huwaish, where they were discovered and heavily bombed by our aeroplanes, whilst Fanshawe's artillery on the left bank took them in enfilade. Norton had been withdrawn to Fathah to fill up with supplies and be in a state of readiness to act as a mobile reserve for either bank.

Cassels, with true soldierly instinct, realizing that attack was his best defence and also hoping to assist the 17th Division, had moved south on the 27th and delivered an attack on the Turkish reserves, after which he had again fallen back on Huwaish. Sanders with his brigade and some artillery was now sent forward from the Lesser Zab and, after a magnificent march of thirty-three miles, his leading battalion crossed the river, joined Cassels, and immediately went into action.

Cassels now held the road, and defied all attempts to break through in spite of the fact that enemy reinforcements were coming down from Mosul and he had to throw back his right flank to oppose this new danger. However, help was at hand, and not only was he joined by the rest of Sanders's force, but Norton with his brigade, after a seventeen-hour march from Fathah, also arrived, and at once took over the protection of the right flank. It was imperative to force a decision, and the troops of the 17th Division responded nobly to the call for fresh exertions.

On the morning of the 29th the Turkish rear-guard had been driven back on to its main body in position just north of Shergat. The attack on this position, launched early in the afternoon, was responded to by a vigorous counter-attack on the part of the Turks, but our men,

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though in places overrun, stoutly maintained their ground, and the counter-attack was repulsed.

Norton's brigade, holding Cassels's right flank, defeated a large reinforcement from Mosul, and in the subsequent pursuit captured over 1,000 prisoners with guns and machine guns.

During the night of 29th/30th October loud explosions were heard all over the Turkish position, and at daybreak, just as our troops were about to renew the attack, white flags appeared all along the Turkish lines, and later Ismail Hakki, the commander of the Tigris force, surrendered in person. This Turkish General was the same officer who had opposed us on the right bank of the Tigris, opposite Kut, in the early part of 1917, and had been one of the last to make good his escape across the river when the remnant of his forces were captured in the Dahra bend.

Norton at once moved north and captured some 500 prisoners beyond Kaiyara, whilst Lewin crossed the Lesser Zab and occupied Altun Keupri. The total bag resulting from this final operation in Mesopotamia consisted of some 12,000 prisoners and over 50 guns. The whole operation, which, as I have indicated, was beset with difficulties, reflected immense credit on both commanders and troops. But this crushing victory was not enough, and orders were at once issued for a column, under Fanshawe (consisting of 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades, 54th Infantry Brigade, and a quota of artillery) to push on and capture Mosul.

By noon on 1st November Fanshawe had reached Kaiyara, and that afternoon I received news of an armistice with Turkey concluded on that date and at that hour. I did not communicate this news to Cobbe or Fanshawe, but on the following morning, when the force had reached

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Hammam Ali, twelve miles south of Mosul, it was met by a flag of truce sent by Ali Ihsan Pasha, with a letter informing Fanshawe of the terms of the armistice, and requesting him to return to Kaiyara as being the farthest point reached at the moment of the signing of the same.

Fanshawe wired to me for instructions, and was ordered to push on to Mosul. Ali Ihsan perforce had to give way and, to save his face, then said that he would welcome the force at Mosul.

For a few days a comic situation prevailed; our troops bivouacked outside the town, whilst Ali Ihsan, posing as commander-in-chief of the Mosul Vilayet, sent his band to play each day outside Fanshawe's headquarters, where "God Save the King," with variations (and many of them), was the principal item in the repertoire.

To end this absurdity I went to Mosul with A. T. Wilson, and invited Ali Ihsan to a conference, which he duly attended with his staff. The terms of the armistice had been, to say the least of it, clumsily drawn up and out-of-date military terms employed, so that Ali Ihsan was prepared to drive a coach and four through many of the articles.

The conference was distinctly funny from my point of view, and no doubt most exasperating to Ali Ihsan. He was very lawyer-like and specious in argument, but I was not prepared to argue at all, and told him, that, however he liked to read the terms, I was determined to take over the whole of Mosul Vilayet; that if he resisted by force of arms I should hold him personally responsible for any blood which might be shed; that his protest would be recorded so that his Government would be aware of it.

He grew very red and angry, but knew that he was

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C. 3. POSTS TELEGRAPHS.

Received here at ___ H. ___ M.

Buckinghampalacelondon 1
NR 2529
Lieut General Sir W R Marshall
General Headqrs
Mesopotamia.

I am delighted to hear that you have finished the campaign in Mesopotamia by the capture of the entire Turkish force on the Tigris with its commander

(2)

C. 3. POSTS TELEGRAPHS. No.

Received here at ___ H. ___ M.

(Commander)
in congratulating you and all ranks on this success I wish to record my grateful appreciation of the part played by the mesopotamian expeditionary force in the complete capitulation of the Turkish army

George R.I.

This form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

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powerless to resist, and I then laid down what I thought were generous terms :

(1) That he and the whole of his troops should be clear of the Mosul Vilayet within ten days.
(2) That they should move by echelon, the first contingent to start the following day.
(3) That the infantry might take their rifles and the ammunition in their bandoliers, the field artillery their guns and ammunition in the limbers.
(4) That all large-calibre guns and howitzers as well as aeroplanes, bombs, arsenals, and stores should be handed over to General Fanshawe, who would give a receipt for them.
(5) That all echelons moving out should do so via Mosul and pass a British examining post.
(6) That all British and Indian prisoners of war in the hands of the Turks should be at once released and repatriated.

Then there were several provisos as to civilian populations.

To these conditions he eventually appended his signature, whilst protesting that they were in contravention of the Armistice terms, and in my innermost heart I was not quite sure that they were not or that the British Government would justify my action.

The following morning I was informed that the Turkish Intendants had been attempting to dispose of army stores to local inhabitants, that the Turkish flag was flying from every public building and that Leachman, who had been appointed Political Officer, had been obstructed when wishing to take over from the Kadi, but that the first echelon of Turkish troops was preparing to move out.

I at once wrote to Ali Ihsan to bring these matters

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to his notice and to inform him that, whilst he remained, his 6th army flag might continue to fly over his head-quarters, but that all Turkish national flags must be at once hauled down.

Several other things occurred in the course of the day, and I eventually had to write to him somewhat curtly. This brought a long and excited answer to the effect that he did not recognize my authority and that he had sent in his resignation to the Minister of War.

Thereupon I wrote that, as he had resigned his command he was no longer of any use to me in carrying out the terms to which he had agreed and would he therefore be good enough to hand over the temporary command to his Chief of the Staff until such time as the next senior General could reach Mosul; and that he himself would be allowed until 10.30 a.m. the following day to be clear of the Mosul Vilayet, failing which he would be made a prisoner of war. He at once asked for an escort of two armoured cars, and went off to Nisibin. With his departure things began to go smoothly, and I returned to Baghdad.

On arrival I found instructions awaiting me which almost word for word corresponded with the action I had taken.

Mosul had always had the unenviable reputation of being one of the dirtiest towns in the East, and I am bound to say that its reputation was fully deserved. Fanshawe, ably assisted by Leachman, at once took the cleansing of this Augean stable in hand; the filth of ages rapidly disappeared and with it the plague of flies.

The town of Mosul lies almost entirely on the right bank of the Tigris and a bridge of boats which spans the river connects it with ancient Nineveh where the

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tomb of Jonah, the great patron saint of the Kurds, is situated. Very little archæological research had yet been undertaken to disclose the buried treasures of ruined Nineveh, but the local inhabitants garner some of them, and whilst in Mosul I got a couple of old Assyrian seals, the intaglios beautifully cut in agate.

The supply of the garrison in Mosul was an anxious question and when an application was received from Monsieur Roux, the French Consul at Basra, Monsignor Martin and Commandant Sciard (French Military Attaché) to proceed there on the pretext of distributing money to the indigent Jewish inhabitants, I was obliged to decline on the plea of lack of transport facilities. Besides, I knew that behind their pretext lay a political motive, and, until the Mosul question had been finally settled between the French and British Governments, local intrigue was better kept in check.

Some time in 1915, the late Sir Mark Sykes, acting presumably on behalf of our Foreign Office, had come to a curious agreement with Monsieur Picot (the Sykes-Picot Agreement), and, as an example of counting the chickens before they were hatched, it was hard to beat. Roughly, it was that Russia should have the whole of the Caucasus as far as Rowanduz, the British the Basra and Baghdad Vilayets, and the French, Syria and the Mosul Vilayet, thus driving in a wedge between the British and Russians. The agreement had never been ratified by the two Governments and the withdrawal of Russia had entirely altered the situation. I was not altogether satisfied that Commandant Sciard was confining himself to his legitimate rôle of Military Attaché, so, as military operations had come to an end, a cable was sent home suggesting his recall and Sciard was informed of the fact. This action nearly

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created an international situation. Sciard cabled his Government, complaining that he was being sent away against his will and eventually I had to retain him.

As a sequel to this episode, when I reached home in March 1919, I was called on to reply to a violent tirade against me from the French Foreign Office. In this document I was accused of all kinds of actions derogatory to the French, none of which accusations, except that of wishing to get rid of Sciard, had even a substratum of truth, but it clearly demonstrated that M. Sciard was a political agent and not a *bonâ fide* Military Attaché.

To return to Persia. During October influenza had raged amongst our troops in that country and, although touch had been kept with the Turkish forces in the Caucasus on the Sennah-Tabriz and Mianeh lines, Thomson was not in a position to do more. Norris with his Navy was dominating the Caspian, and most of the Bolshevik war vessels were ice-bound in Astrakhan. General Malleson (commanding the East Persian cordon with Headquarters at Meshed) was having a war on his own in the neighbourhood of Merv and, much to my indignation, had commandeered part of the Krasnovodsk garrison to take part in this quite unnecessary adventure.

Ana, on the Euphrates line, had been occupied by the 1st November, so that the armistice saw us with a really far-flung battle-line from Merv on the Oxus on our right flank, to Ana on our left. Later the Hampshires were returned by Malleson to Krasnovodsk, but our Euphrates line was advanced to Deir-ez-Zor.

Nuri Pasha, who was in occupation of Baku, at first refused to recognize the Armistice or evacuate this district, but on the 16th November, Thomson at the head of a British force and accompanied by representa-

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tives of France and America left Enzeli, with a fleet of seventeen transports escorted by Norris's Navy, for Baku. En route he was joined by Bicharakov with his following, escorted by the Russian Caspian fleet, and the combined force entered Baku harbour unopposed on the 17th. The Turks vacated the town that afternoon, but gave much trouble before they were eventually removed from the Caucasus. The Georgians and Armenians started trouble and Thomson had to send a mission to Tiflis to stop hostilities breaking out. His hands were certainly full and his responsibilities many and varied, but he handled all with the utmost ability and firmness.

The task of supplying the forces in Persia had always been a very difficult one, so that when part of the Salonika army occupied Batoum I asked that we might be allowed to transfer Thomson and his Persian force to Milne, who would be in a better position to administer and control Northern Persia and the Caucasus. This was agreed to and a great burden was taken from our shoulders. The sweeping up after a campaign is always an arduous and tiresome operation and in our case was complicated by political questions. President Wilson's Fourteen Points and his twaddle about self-determination and the rights of small nations were the parrot-cries of the moment. Instructions were received to canvas the various districts to find out from the Arabs whom they wished to govern them, whether Turks, British or one of their own people. Generally the answer came pat, and the local " Cokkus " or political officer was at once nominated as their future ruler. The intelligentsia were different and, being mostly Mohammedans, they *ipso facto* voted for a ruler of their own religion.

To my mind the Naqib of Baghdad put the matter

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in a nutshell when he said: "Why do you ask these foolish questions? If you ask an assembly of Mohammedans whether it would prefer a Mohammedan or an infidel ruler, it is bound to say the former, whatever its real sentiments are. The British Government has spent much blood and treasure in conquering the country, so why does it now not wish to rule it?"

On the 11th November the World War finally came to an end and I announced the fact in public before a large Baghdad audience. There seemed to be little enthusiasm amongst the troops that the long struggle had eventually reached its close, but probably a deep thankfulness took the place of outward signs of exhilaration. I cannot flatter myself that after the capture of Baghdad the general public at home took much interest in the fortunes of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, nor am I now at all certain that our efforts greatly contributed towards the final victory. But of one thing I am sure, and that is that it was both an honour and a pleasure to command such an army. The morale of the Force was something wonderful, its will to conquer magnificent, and no march was too long, no task too great and no hostile position too strong for it to overcome. I had served on three other fronts in varying capacities, but they were all disappointing, whilst Mesopotamia was from a soldiering point of view a live show.

From the time that I commanded a battalion I had always had good staffs but never perhaps had I been so lucky as during my command of an army. Gillman with his great knowledge of staff work and duties, his wonderful tact and great abilities was an ideal Chief of the Staff, and G.H.Q. ran on greased wheels under his guidance. Stuart-Wortley was a glutton for

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THE AUTHOR ABOUT TO READ THE PROCLAMATION ANNOUNCING CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES WITH TURKEY.

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work, who ran all the varied departments and directorates with seeming ease and certainly with much ability. Ready, was always prepared with a considered opinion on any problem which might present itself, and absolutely sound and reliable. Such were my three chief Staff Officers and with such heads to the Staff it was only to be expected that all departments should give of their best. On the Civil side I was fortunate enough to have first Sir Percy Cox and then Sir A. T. Wilson, both brilliant men. Could I have been better served ?

The responsibility was mine, but the way to success was made easy by the good work of the Staff and the completion of it by able subordinate commanders and their invincible troops.

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INDEX

Abdul Kadir, Sunni Mosque of, 300
Abu Ghuraib, 243, 266, 267, 301
Abu Zanabil, 266, 267
Achi Baba, 54, 70, 71, 77, 81, 129, 132, 141, 143
Adhaim, river, 233–246, 266, 267, 281, 301
Afghanistan, 283, 308
Agnew, Colonel, 103
Agricultural development in Mesopotamia, 280, 316
Ahwaz, 264, 277, 278
Ain Nakhaila, 320
Aitken, General, 7–9
Aleppo road, 289, 290
Alexander the Great, 300
Alexandria, 47, 48, 149, 150
Ali, mosque of, 291
Ali Ihsan Beg, 233, 240, 244, 245, 324, 325
Allenby, General, 267, 279
Altham, General Sir E., 287, 288
Altun Keupri, 319, 323
Amade, General d', 48, 54, 61, 68, 75
Amarah, 191, 192, 273, 288
Ana, 290, 328
Andrus, Brigadier-General, 202–205, 226, 229, 235, 310
Anglo-Persian oilfields, 277
Anzac, 60, 64, 66, 75, 107, 108, 110, 136, 142
Arabs, marauding, 201, 220, 234; despise cultivation, 222; government of, 329
Aragon, s.s., 48, 102, 103, 146
Armenian refugees, 313
Arz, Simon, 13
Asshur, 321
Assyrian refugees, 312
Astrakhan, 328
Atab, 200, 201
Atherstone pack, 44
Aubers Ridge, 49
Austin, General, 271, 273, 312
Austrian Consul in Bombay, 6
Avasil, 153
Aylmer, General, 195
Aziziyeh, 220, 221, 272
Azmak Dere, 126, 135
Babel, Tower of, 300
Babylon, 299
Baghailah, 220, 222, 272
Baghdad, 246, 300, 310, 327; advance on, 217–226; captured, 226, 229–231; scheme to recapture, 267, 290; gymkhana or Sporting Club, 251–254, 295; Y.M.C.A. club, 295
Baghdad, Naqib of, 329
Bakhtiari Khans, 278
Baku, 306, 307, 310–312, 315, 328, 329
Baldwin, Brigadier-General, 105
Balfour, Captain, 291, 292
Baqubah, 231–233, 246, 248, 249, 252–255, 306, 312
Baratoff, General, 284, 313
Barclay (Surrey Yeomanry), 153, 169, 171
Barker, General J. S. S., 47
Barrett, Sir Arthur, 8
— Lieut.-Colonel ("The Boomer"), 270
Basra, 188–190, 268, 274–277, 279, 294, 310, 327
Batoum, 329
Bawi, 223, 224, 226
Beach (Staff Officer), 295
Beck (Flying Corps), 38
Beelzebub, 318
"Beetles," 127, 134, 138, 139
Beled, 231
Beled Ruz, 249, 256, 258
Bell, Miss Gertrude, 189, 247, 297, 299
Bengalis (49th), 269–272
Beshik Lake, 153, 156, 158, 159
Bettelheim, Captain von, 51
Bharatpur Transport Corps, 133
Bicharakov, Colonel, 264–266, 284, 304–307, 329
Bijar, 305, 306
Billets, 20, 23, 43
Birdwood, General, 47, 54, 60, 131, 145
"Birs Nimrud," 299
Bitumen, preservative qualities of, 299
"Black Saliba," 47
Black Watch (5th Batt.), 33
Blackburne, Mrs., 150
Boar, wild, 259

Digitized by Google

Bombay, 1–10, 182–185, 307
" Boomerang " redoubt, 85–87, 91, 94, 98
Border Regiment, 42, 43, 56–58, 63, 94, 106, 115, 116, 145
Bosanquet, Colonel, 105
Boulogne, 163
Braine, (Munster Regt.), 61, 62
Braithwaite —, 124
" Break through " theory, 85, 129
Breeks, General, 75, 76, 84
Brigades :
Australian, 60, 71, 73, 75, 141, 142
Cavalry, 254–256, 264, 319, 323
East Lancashire, 107, 108
Lancashire Fusilier, 70, 71
Manchester, 77–79, 81, 82, 107, 108
New Zealand, 60, 71, 72, 75, 142
Royal Marine, 166, 171
3rd, 256
24th, 15, 25
29th Indian Infantry, 69, 74, 79, 80, 82, 91, 94, 139
38th, 198
39th, 198, 202–204, 310
40th, 202
54th, 323
80th, 154, 158, 159, 166, 171, 174
81st, 154, 156, 166, 171, 175
82nd, 154, 156, 166, 171, 176
86th, 52, 61, 62, 70, 83, 84, 95, 96, 104, 111, 114–118
87th, 41 *et seq.*, 144, 145
88th, 54, 61–63, 70, 71, 74, 79–83, 96, 104, 109, 114, 115
156th, 93, 95, 96
Briggs, General, 165, 172, 174, 175, 178
Bright (Staff Officer), 200, 202, 207
Broadhurst, Sergeant, 43, 65, 67
Brooke, Brigadier-General, 166, 176
Brooking, General, 249, 255, 264, 284, 285, 288, 289, 298
Brownrigg (Staff Officer), 105, 191, 246
Bulgaria joins Turkey, 132, 151–153 ; the Bulgarian army in the Struma valley, 170–177
Burmah battalion, 273
Burning the dead Turks, 88
Bustan, 221
Butler, Brigadier-General, 120, 121, 180
Buxton, Commander, 237
Byng, General, 119, 128, 132, 134, 136, 137, 147

Campbell, Captain, 31
— Brigadier-General, 209, 275
Candler (" Eye-witness "), 203
Cape (Staff Officer), 120
Capper, Colonel, 193, 233, 246, 304, 306
Carleton, Dudley, 161, 162
Carter, General, 15, 25, 28, 40
— (Staff Officer), 119–121, 134, 135, 137, 145, 147, 148, 153, 161–163, 172, 175, 180, 182, 185, 188, 200, 233, 241, 242, 252, 295, 307
Cary, Brigadier-General, 233, 246
Caspian, the, 283–285, 303, 307, 310, 315, 328
Cassels, Brigadier-General, 207, 235–239, 254, 264, 267, 289, 319–323
Casson, Colonel, 43, 52, 61, 62, 77, 86, 104, 109
Castle, Captain, 22, 31
Castros, 104, 125
Caucasus, the, 282, 286, 327–329
Cayley, General, 83, 114, 117, 191, 198, 218, 225, 226, 231, 233, 235, 236, 241, 246, 253, 302
Chambers, Lieut., 18
Chelmsford, Lord and Lady, 294, 308, 309
Chocolate Hill, Suvla, 112–115, 117, 120
Clarke (Staff Officer), 153
Cobbe, General, 195, 216, 229, 231, 239 240, 248, 249, 257, 258, 264, 301, 307, 319, 323
Cockerill (Assistant Provost-Marshal), 169, 178
Colaba Barracks, 2
Constantine, King, 165
Cooper, Lady, 18
— Sir George, 15, 17
Cornwallis, H.M.S., 104
Corps :
Ist, 195, 198, 199, 217, 226, 264, 268, 288
IIIrd, 192, 193, 195, 196, 209, 210, 216, 217, 221, 233, 248, 250, 252, 254, 263, 264, 266, 268
VIIIth, 77, 109
XIth, 119
Costeker, Brigade-Major, 51
Cotton-growing in Mesopotamia, 317
Cotton trade of Bombay, 2, 3
Courts-martial, 277
Cowans, Brigadier-General, 120, 124
Cox, Major-General Herbert, 69, 74, 79, 82, 84, 91, 93, 94
— Sir Percy, 189, 247, 249, 250, 261, 276, 280, 297, 308, 314, 331 ; his influence amongst the Arabs, 268
Crocker, —, 207–209, 219
Croker, Brigadier-General, 154, 160, 166
Crookenden (Staff Officer), 137, 145

Digitized by Google

Ctesiphon, 183, 219, 221, 222, 300
Curzon, Lord, 308

Dahra Bend, 209, 210
Daniel, tomb of, 278
d'Apici (of the Gunners), 61
d'Arcy-Clarke (Derbyshire Yeomanry), 158
Dardanelles, *see* Gallipoli
Dardanelles Committee, 130
Darius, palace of, 278
Dartmouth, H.M.S., 11, 12
Davidson, Captain, R.N., 60, 104
Davies, General, 109
Davis, General, 16, 24, 38, 40
De Havilland (aeronaut), 196
Deir-ez-Zor, 328
Deli, 233
Deli Abbas, 264
de Lisle, General, 82–84, 90, 93, 97–99, 103, 105, 108–113, 118, 119, 143, 145
Deltawah, 232, 233, 235, 246, 249
Demirhissar, 173
Deolali, 1, 2, 5
Derry (Staff Officer), 137, 145
Dilworth (Machine Gun Officer), 31, 34, 35
Dimitri, Grand Duke, 313
Divisions:
  3rd (Lahore), 5, 199, 209, 231, 232, 264, 288
  7th (Meerut), 5, 198, 216, 231, 264, 267, 268
  8th, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 28, 38, 43
  10th, 101, 128, 153, 174
  11th, 101, 105, 113–116
  13th, 101, 105, 106, 110, 123, 125, 139, 145, 191, 192, 195–198, 200, 201, 204, 213, 215, 217, 218, 220, 223, 229, 231, 233–235, 249, 256, 257, 264, 266
  14th (Indian), 192–194, 197, 199–201, 204, 212, 215, 218, 219, 223, 224, 229, 231, 233, 249, 263, 264, 266
  15th, 249, 264
  17th, 263, 264, 268, 319–322
  18th (Indian), 263, 264, 288, 319, 320
  22nd, 153
  26th, 153, 165
  27th, 137, 147, 148, 153–160, 165–180
  28th, 153, 175
  29th, 40, 41, 45 *et seq.*, 141
  42nd (Lancashire Territorial), 74, 77, 107
  52nd (Lowland), 93, 101, 109, 131
  53rd (Welch), 101, 119 *et seq.*, 128, 146
  54th (East Anglian), 101, 112
  Cavalry, 171, 195–198, 201, 202, 207, 208, 215, 217–219, 221, 226, 235, 254, 258, 264, 286, 315
  Royal Naval, 74, 75, 79, 82, 86, 89, 107, 166
Diwaniyeh, 280
Dixon, Captain, 31, 49
Dobbie, —, 23, 24
Dobbs, Sir Henry, 308
Dod, Wolley, *see* Wolley-Dod
Dogameh, 233
Doiran, 151, 152, 174, 175
Doran, Brigadier-General W., 80, 83
Douglas, —, 39
— Colonel, 8
— General, 107
Dujailah depression, 193–196
Dummy general, 100
Duncan, Brigadier-General, 174, 175
Dunsterville, General ("Stalky"), 282, 285, 287, 304, 305, 307, 310–312
Durazzo, 152
Dyalah river, 221–225, 231–233, 235, 249, 255–257, 259, 264–266, 281, 303, 316

Edden, Captain, 43, 48, 90, 98
Edwards, Brigadier-General, 231, 232
Egan, Mrs., 260
Egerton, General Raleigh, 193, 212, 213 215, 233, 235, 246, 253, 256, 257, 263–266, 300–302
Egypt, 136, 141
El Hadr, 320
Enzeli, 285, 304–306, 312, 315, 329
Erbil District, 286
Es Sinn, 193, 194, 197, 201
"Eski line," 63, 105
Estaires, 36–38
Estaires–La Bassée road, 23, 27
Euphrates, 248, 249, 255, 264, 280, 281, 284, 285, 288, 290, 303, 328
Evans, Fraser & Co., 276
Ewin, Captain, 106
Ezra, Captain, 299
Ezra's Tomb, 191

Falkenhayn, General, 248
Fane, General, 231, 239, 268
Fanshawe, General Hew, 263, 309, 319, 322–326
Fao, 185
Fathah Gorge, 258, 319, 320, 322
Felujah, 232, 249, 280
Fernie pack, 44
Festing (Staff Officer), 61
Fielding, George, 106
Firefly, H.M.S., 219
Fishing in Mesopotamia, 281

Digitized by Google

Fitz-williams, —, 246
Forshaw, Captain, V.C., 108
Fortresses, the holding of, 186
France, Western Front, 20–40, 48, 49
Frankland, Brigade-Major, 51
Fraser (Staff Officer), 185, 186, 193, 200, 205, 207, 233, 235, 241, 266, 282, 312
Fraternization, 35, 36
Freeland, General, 294
Fuller (Staff Officer), 111, 147, 148, 153

Gaba Tepe, 54, 60
Gallipoli—29th Division embarks for Gallipoli, 45; the harbour of Mudros, 49; transport attacked by a Turkish torpedo-boat, 49; preparations for the landing, 52–55; the landing, 56–73; the water-supply, 64; Gully Ravine, 74–92; shortage of shells, 84, 87; trench fighting at Helles, 93–111; insanitary conditions, 100, 124; stalemate at Suvla, 112–130; Suvla evacuated, 131–146; mistakes and results of the expedition, 140–145
Gallipolitis, 124, 127, 136
Ganeshkhind, 307, 309
Garbett (Indian Civil Service), 280
Gaza, capture of, 147
George V, 45
Gibson, Rev., 155, 169
Gifts sent to the soldiers, 36
Gillman, General, 105, 165, 180, 262, 263, 279, 282, 287, 288, 295, 309, 313, 330
Godley, General, 145
Going, Colonel, 109
"Going's Hump," 110
Goldie, K. O., 184, 188, 251, 254, 298
Goltz, von der, 230
Gorringe, General, 1, 2, 8–10
Gouraud, General, 75, 89, 94, 99, 104
Grace, Captain, R.N., 173
Grafton, H.M.S., 173, 177
Grant, Sir Hamilton, 308
Greek army, 151, 157, 165, 170
Green Hill, Suvla, 112, 114–118
Greenway (Military Secretary), 300
Grey, —, 190
Grogan (Staff Officer), 165
Ground of non-tactical value, 28
Gully Beach, 105
Gully Ravine, 64, 74–95, 98, 107
Gunning, Brigadier-General, 205, 224, 232
Gurkhas, 69, 80, 81, 96, 98, 110, 212, 214, 304

Haditha, 290
Hadr, El, *see* El Hadr.
Hadraniyeh, 321
Hai waterway, 194, 196–205, 208–213, 216
Hai town, 207
Hamadan, 285, 304, 306
Hamilton, General Sir Ian, 47, 48, 50–52, 72, 84, 92, 94, 99, 118, 124, 129, 131, 141, 143, 178; his character, 128
Hammam Ali, 324
Hammar Lake, 277
Hammersley, General, 113, 118
Hampden, Lord, 107, 108
Hampshire Regiment, 214, 310, 315, 328
Hamrin, Jebel, *see* Jebel Hamrin.
Hare, Brigadier-General, 51, 52, 61, 124, 154, 160, 166
Haricot redoubt, 75, 89
Harrison (Border Regt.), 90
Hart, Reggie, 90
Hauran, Wadi, 289
Hawker (Military Governor of Baghdad), 260
Hazara Pioneer Battalion, 252
Helles area, 61, 69, 71, 77, 93–111, 128, 129, 131, 132, 136, 141, 143, 145, 146
Hemsley (Staff Officer), 233, 241
Herts Yeomanry, 201, 226, 235
Hewitt, Hon. George and Mrs., 15, 19
— Sir John, 288
Hillah, 280, 298, 300, 303
Hinaidie, 229, 250, 264
Hindiyeh barrage, 280, 281, 300
Hit, 284, 288
Hobart, Major, 289, 290
Hodgson, Bobby, 31, 39, 49
Hodson's Horse, 201
Holdsworth (Remount Dept.), 254
Holland, Sir Thomas, 288
Holland-Pryor, Brigadier-General, 255, 271, 301
Home, Colonel, 57, 63
Hopwood, General, 262, 263, 279
Horne, General, 164
Hortiach, 153, 156, 166, 174
Hoskins, General, 262
Howell (Chief of General Staff), 165
Howell-Jones ("D.A.D.O.S."), 88
Hughes, Major ("Bunny"), 253
Hume, Captain, 13, 22, 23, 31
— Brigadier-General, 120–122
Humr, El, *see* El Humr.
Hunt, Colonel (Toby), 182, 197
Hunter-Weston, General, 45, 50–53, 61, 67, 72, 77, 79, 85, 92, 105

Digitized by Google

Hunting, 44
Hursley Park, 13–19
Hussars, 221, 305
Hussein, mosque of, 293
Huwaish, 321, 322

Ibn Rashid, 282
Ibn Saoud, 282
Imam Mansur, 197, 201
Imbros, 102, 124, 125, 140, 145
Implacable, H.M.S., 56
India, 1–11, 182–185, 307–310; Turco-German move against, 283, 308
Indian Army Regulations, 251
Indian Cavalry (10th), 286
Indian drabi, 133
Indian Expeditionary Force, 5, 8, 11, 12, 46
Indian "pay," 17
Irrigation in Mesopotamia, 316
Irvine, Captain, 11, 12
Ismail Hakki, 210, 323
Ismail Oglu Tepe (Hill 103), 113, 114, 117–119
Istabulat, 239, 257, 304

Jackson, Sir John, 281
James, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur, 44, 163
Jebal Sinjar tribes, 318
Jebel Hamrin, 232, 233, 236, 242–245, 249, 255–257, 264–266, 319
Jerusalem, 267
Johnson ("S.W.B."), 86, 88
— (chief engineer), 250
Jonah, tomb of, 327
Jones, Miss, 276
— Colonel, 43, 69
— General, 221, 264, 266, 267, 315
José, club hall porter, 47
Julnar, 258
Jungalis tribe, 283, 286, 304, 305

Kachins company, 273
Kadhiman, 226
Kaiyara, 323, 324
Karakol Dagh, 113, 125
Kara Tepe, 301
Karun river, 277, 303
Kashmir, 2
Kasr-i-Shirin, 283
Kasvin, 304, 305
Kauntze, Major, 193
Kavalla, 170, 173
Kazimain, Shiah Mosque at, 300
Keary General, 199, 232, 257, 262
Kelly, Captain, R.N., 52
Kenna, General, 117
— Mrs. Paul, 44
Kennion, Colonel, 285
Keogh (Cavalry Officer), 201
Kerbela, 280, 286, 293
Kefeves Dere ("l'Haricot"), 75
Kermanshah, 304, 306
Kershaw (Staff Officer), 108
Keyes, Adrian, 61–63, 98
Khaidairi Bend, 199
Khalis Canal, 233, 236, 249
Khan Bagdadi, 289
Khan Feheme, 290
Khanikhin, 267
Khoja Chemen Tepe, 119
Kifri, 301, 302
Kilid Bahr, 129, 141
King's Own Scottish Borderers, 42, 43, 46, 52, 54, 59, 60, 67, 69, 71, 80, 81, 84, 93, 95–97, 103, 131, 145
Kiretch Tepe, 112, 113, 119
Kirkuk, 248, 249, 301–303, 319, 321
Kitchener, Lord, 130, 131, 133
Kizil Robat, 246, 257
Knox ("D.Q.M.G."), 250
Koe, Colonel, 45, 60
Krasnovodsk, 310, 315, 328
Krithia Nullah, 62, 63, 67, 78, 107, 108
Kuchik Khan, 283, 286, 305
Kum Kale, 54, 60
Kut, 186–188, 194, 195, 198, 204, 210–217, 272

Lahore, Bishop of, 318
Lajj, 221
Lala Baba, 114, 120, 124, 126, 132–140
Lancashire Fusiliers, 56, 79, 80, 95
Lancers, 201, 240
Langaza Lake, 153, 157
Langevuk, 156, 165, 171
Lascelles, Colonel, 26, 35
Laventie, 22
Lawrence, General Herbert, 107, 108, 119, 131
Layes, river, 27, 37
Leachman (Political Officer), 325, 326
Lee, General Noel, 77–80
Lemnos, island of, 65, 104
Leslie, General, 263, 268, 319
— (Partisanski detachment), 265
Lesser Zab, 286, 301, 302, 320, 322, 323
Leveson-Gower, Colonel, 22
Lewin, Brigadier-General, 202–205, 207–209, 225, 235, 236, 241–243, 245, 246, 302, 319–321, 323
Ley, Sir Francis, 37
Lieven, Princess, 265, 284
Light Armoured Motor Batteries, 319–321
Lindley, General, 119

Digitized by Google

Lisle, General de, *see* de Lisle
Locusts, 234
Lowther, Adjutant, 33, 44
— Lady, 44
Loyal North Lancashire Regt., 225
Lucas, Brigade-Major, 42, 43, 51, 62, 66, 77, 78, 80, 110, 114
Lumsden, Capt. R. N., 5
Lynden-Bell (Staff Officer), 146

Macedonia, 151–180
McGowan (Partisanski detachment), 265
Mackay ("C.R.A."), 241
Mackensen, General, 248
Mackenzie (13th Lancers), 241, 246
MacMunn, George, 145, 188, 220, 264, 272, 274, 275, 288
Magasis, 195
Mahon, General Sir Bryan, 147, 152, 160, 165
Mahrut, 249, 256
Majestic sunk, 76
Malaria, 177
Malcolm (Staff Officer), 114
Malleson, General, 328
Malta, 46
Manchester Regt., 78, 108
Mandzil, 305
Mansuriyeh, 256, 257
Mantis, H.M.S., 237
Maps, small-scale, 303
Marling, Lady, 313
— Sir Charles, 284–287, 308, 313
Marshall, Lady (author's wife), 2, 3, 15, 16, 19, 38, 44, 163, 184
— Judge (author's brother), 48, 150, 180
— Capt. W. M., 291
— Lieut.-General Sir William: his army career, v; wounded, 35; goes home on leave, 38; appointed to command a brigade of the 29th Division, 40; in temporary command of 29th Division, 61; instructs commander of Manchester Brigade, 77; promoted to rank of Major-General, 91; in temporary command of 42nd Division, 107; takes command of 29th Division, 110; appointed to command of 53rd Division, 119; appointed to 27th Division, 137; leave home, 160; awarded order of "The White Eagle of Serbia," 165; awarded a C.B., 178; appointed to command a Corps in Mesopotamia, and granted temporary rank of Lieut.-Gen., 179; created K.C.B., 247; recommended to succeed Maude in Mesopotamia, 248; in command of the Mesopotamian Army, 261, 262; a month's leave in India, 307
Martin, Monsignor, 327
Matthews, Colonel, 52
Maude, General, 97, 123, 125, 137, 139, 140, 145, 146, 182, 184, 188–199, 202, 203, 207–214, 217, 220, 225, 226, 229–232, 235, 247–251, 255, 256, 258, 270; pen portrait of, 227; his illness and death, 259–261
Maurice, Freddy, 190
Mendali, 255–257, 264, 265
Merv, 328
Merville, 20
Mesopotamia, 179, 182–331
Mesopotamian Inland Water Transport, 190
Methuen, Lord, 46
Mex, 47, 48
Mianeh, 305, 328
Middlesex Pioneer Battalion, 177
Miller (Transport Officer), 18
— George, 43
— Sergeant, 31
Milne, General George ("Uncle George"), 153, 154, 160, 165, 167, 180, 329
Minnetonka, s.s., 103
Mirjana, 266, 267
Moens, Colonel, 306
Mohamed Abdul Hassan trenches, 199, 200
Monastir, 152, 164
Money, General, 196, 262
Monro, Lady, 309
— General Sir Charles, 130, 133, 134, 146, 181, 182, 253, 270, 307, 309, 313
Morgan, M. de, 278
Morley, Captain, 31, 49
Mortimore (Sherwood Foresters), 25, 32, 40, 49
Morto Bay, 52
Mosquitoes, 172, 176
Mosul, 248, 286; advance towards, 318–324; captured, 324–328
Mott, Brigadier-General Tom, 120, 125–127, 135, 181
Muadhem, 229, 300
Mudros, 48–51, 65, 102–104, 145, 146
Munster Fusiliers, 70, 95
Muradiyeh Canal, 249
Murray, General Sir A., 180, 248
Mushaidie, 231

Digitized by Google

Nahr Kellak, 219
Nahrin Kupri, 266, 267
Nahrwan Canal, 235, 238
Nakhaila, Ain, *see* Ain Nakhaila
Napier, Brigadier-General, 51, 54, 60
Nasariyeh, 249, 276, 280
Nasr, sheikh, 276
Navy, *see* Royal Navy
Nebuchadnezzar, palace of, 299
Neilson (Staff Officer), 171, 180, 182, 185, 188, 232, 307, 308
Nejd, 282
Nejef, 280, 286, 290–293
Neohori, 170–172, 174
Neuf Berquin, 20, 22
Neuve Chapelle, 48
Newenham, Colonel, 56, 58
Newfoundland contingent, 131
Nicholson, Colonel, 15, 23, 35, 37
Nineveh, 326
Norfolk Regiment, 212, 214
Norris, Commodore, 315, 328, 329
Northamptonshire Yeomanry, 33, 34
Norton, Brigadier-General, 256, 319, 320, 322, 323
Nuri Pasha, 315, 328

O'Dowda, Brigadier-General, 204, 205, 207, 209, 223–225, 235–237, 240–243, 246, 302
Officers, keeping in reserve of, 97
O'Hagen (Field Ambulance Officer), 43
Oil in Mesopotamia, 317
Orders, original, 58
O'Sullivan ("V.C." R. Innis. Fusiliers), 44, 86, 88, 98, 99

Paget, Lady, Hospital of, 152
Pai-Tak, 283
Palestine, 267
Partisanski detachment, 264–266, 284, 306
Paterson, —, 67
Paul, Colonel, 253
Peck ("C.R.A."), 240
Penno ("A.Q.M.G."), 120
Perceval (Staff Officer), 98, 111, 114
Persia, 283–287, 304–306, 308, 310, 328, 329
Persian Famine Relief Commission, 317
Petre, Captain Roderick, 43, 66, 67, 70, 71, 110, 192
Peyton, General, 126, 127, 135
Phelps, Colonel, 150
Phillips (Signals Officer), 43
Picot, Monsieur, 327
Pike, Colonel, 116
"Pink Farm," 64, 65
Plunkett (Staff Officer), 153
Polo, 254, 259, 295
Poona, 183, 307, 309
"Port Arthur" section, 33, 37
Port Said, 12
Prendergast, Brigadier-General, 71, 72
Preusser, —, 290, 291
Proudfoot (Sanitary Officer), 124, 135
Pryor, Holland, *see* Holland-Pryor
Pusht-i-Kuh, Wali of, 256
Pytchley meet, 44

Qarah Teppeh, 265, 267
Quadrilateral redoubt, 98
Quizil Rabat, 266

Rain in Mesopotamia, 211
Ramadie, 249, 255, 264, 281, 284
Rasputin, 313
Rattray, Colonel, 205
Ravenshaw, General, 180
Rawlinson, Colonel, 307, 312
— General Sir H., 18, 307
Ready (Deputy Adj.-Gen.), 262, 331
"Red Barn," 23, 25, 35, 38
Resht, 305
Reynolds (W. Indian Turf Club), 183
Richardson (Headquarter Staff in India), 181
— Colonel, 221
Rigby, Dr., 300
River Clyde, ex-collier, 52 *n.*, 142
Robeck, Admiral de, 50, 129
Roberts, Lord, 260
— Brigadier-General Bobby, 166, 171, 174, 175
Robertson, Sir William, 188, 190, 248, 262, 263
Rochdale, Lord, 72
Roos-Keppel, Colonel, 308
Ross and Argyll battery, 74
Roupel Pass, 170, 173
Roux, Monsieur, 327
Rowanduz, 327
Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 70, 95, 96
Royal Fusiliers, 56–58, 95, 109
Royal Indian Marine, 5
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 43, 56, 58, 69, 86, 93, 95, 96, 98, 115, 116, 145
Royal Marines, 52
Royal Navy in Macedonia, 158; in Mesopotamia, 217–220, 237
Royal Scots (5th), 67
Royal Warwicks, 203
Rugby, 41–45.
Russian army in Persia, 283
Ruz Canal, 256

S. Beach, Gallipoli, 52, 58–60
Sabæans, 192

Digitized by Google

Sain Kaleh, 305
St. John, Colonel, 298
Sakaltutan Pass, 257, 266, 267
Saklawiyeh dam, 229
Salisbury, Lord, 303
Salmon, 281
Salonika, 128, 131, 132, 137, 146–179
Salt Lake, Suvla, 120, 134
Samarra, 238, 249
Samawa, 280
Sand-flies, 246
Sanders, Brigadier-General, 291, 320, 322
Sanitation, military, 70, 168
Sannaiyat, 198, 199, 211, 215, 216
Sari Bair, 110, 119
Sarrail, General, 125, 151–153, 162, 165, 166, 174–176, 185
Sassoon, Captain, 252
Sciard, Commandant, 327, 328
Scimitar Hill (Hill 70), 113–119
Seddel Bahr, 59, 60
Sennah, 328
Serbian army, 151, 152, 164
Serres, 173
Serres road, 154, 175, 176
Shahraban, 255, 256, 259, 265, 268
Shaw, General "Fred," 40, 45, 105, 110, 123
Sheikh Jaad, 218, 219
Sheikh Saad, 192, 193, 208, 215
Shells, shortage of, at Gallipoli, 84, 87, 143
Sherbrooke, Lieut., 31
— Commander, 237
Shergat, 321, 322
Sherwood Foresters (1st Batt.), 1, 6, 8–40; (Service Batt.), 105
Shiah Mohammedans, 291, 292
Shumran, 208–213, 219
Shush (Shushan), 264, 278
Shustar, 278
Shuttleworth, Digby, 189, 205, 254, 312
Sikhs, 81, 204
Simla, 307–309
Simpson, Quartermaster, 84
Simpson-Baikie, General, 84, 87, 89, 94
Sindiyeh, 231, 233, 234, 246, 249
Sinjabis tribe, 301
Skeen (Headquarter Staff in India), 181
Sladen, Colonel, 43, 45, 47
Smalley (Sherwood Foresters), 35
Smith, Brigadier-General, 154, 159, 160, 166
— Colonel (Fred P.), 154, 168, 172, 174
— Percy, 252
Smuts, General, 279
Snipers, 24
Socks, 19
Somers, Corporal, 98, 99
South Wales Borderers, 42, 43, 48, 52, 54, 59, 60, 86, 88, 93, 95, 96, 103, 104, 109, 116, 145
Souvenir collecting, 20
Standard Oil Company, 317
Stanley (Red Cross Commissioner), 250
Stavros, 153, 160, 166, 171, 177
Stephen, Lieut. John (author's stepson), 15, 16, 19, 163, 287
Stoney, Colonel, 84, 103, 131
— (Staff Officer), 255
Stopford, General, 105, 107, 110
Storks, 178, 253
Stranger, —, 25, 49
Struma Valley, 170–180
Stuart-Wortley ("D.Q.M.G."), 262, 330
Submarine menace, 76, 150, 163, 177, 181
Suffolk, Lord, 185
Suhaniyeh, 266
Sulimaniyeh, 302, 303
Surrey Yeomanry, 171
Sussex, 163
Suvla area, 65, 107, 108, 110–149
Suwaikiyeh Marsh, 202, 207
Sykes, Sir Mark, 327

Tabriz, 328
Tak-i-Girra, 283, 301
Tauk, 319
Taylor, Brigadier-General, 117
Taza Khurmatli, 301, 302, 319, 320,
Teheran, 286
Tekrit, 257, 258, 264, 268, 304, 319
Tel Muhammed, 225, 226
Tennant (Air Force), 289, 290
Terpsichore, 104, 125
Territorial units in Gallipoli, 121–123, 125
Thompson (Light Armoured Motor Batteries), 320
Thomson, General, 204, 207, 208, 223, 226, 229, 232, 233, 235–237, 240–243, 246, 248, 255–257, 263, 312, 314, 328, 329
Thongwa, 11
Thursby, Admiral, 173
Tiflis, 329
Tigris, 191–194, 204, 205, 208, 210–226, 229–239, 248, 249, 257, 258, 264, 268, 272–277, 301, 303, 321, 323, 326
Tigris salmon, 281
Tin reflectors, 76
Torpedo-boat attack, 49

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Tortoise, a dead, 58
Townshend, General, 187, 198, 219
Travers-Clarke (Deputy Quarter-master-General), 165
Trenches, the " A " lines trenches, 28 ; pumping out the trenches, 37
Triumph sunk, 76
Trotman, General, 166
Tuz Khurmatli, 301–303, 319

Umr Maidan, 266
Ur, 277
Urmia, 305
Utmaniyeh, 320, 321

V. Beach, Gallipoli, 52, 58, 60, 64, 69
Vaughan, Brevet Lieut.-Colonel, 57, 153
Venizelos, M., 151, 157
Via Ignatia, 156, 159
Vieille Chapelle, 22, 34
Vineyard trench, 108

W. Beach, Gallipoli, 52, 58, 60, 61, 64, 69
Walker, General, 145
— (R.E. Officer), 154
Wallace, General, 103
Walters, Lance-Corporal, 31, 35
Walton, Brigadier-General, 204, 224
Washington, Captain, R.N., 315
Wassmuss, —, 269
Water-bottles, 10
Water-supply in Mesopotamia, 195
Webbe, Captain, 31, 49
Webster, Lieut.-Colonel, 5, 39
Weeks (R.E. Officer), 201
Welch, Colonel, 69
West Indian Labour Corps, 275
Western Front, 20–40, 48, 49
Western India Turf Club, 251
White-Thompson, Brigadier-General, 154
Wickham, Colonel, 33, 34
Widdrington, Brigadier-General, 166
Wiggin, —, 117
Willcocks, General Sir James, 5
— Sir William, 280, 281
Willcox, Dr., 259, 260
Williams (Military Secretary), 262, 268, 287, 295
— Brigadier-General, 80
Willingdon, Lord and Lady, 3, 5, 10, 183–185, 251, 252, 274, 284, 297, 298, 300, 307–309
Willoughby, General, 193, 246
Wilson, President, 329
— General (" Fatty "), 153
— Sir A. T., 297, 308, 316, 324, 331
— Sir Henry, 263, 311
Winter, Ormonde, 101
Wolley-Dod, Brigadier-General, 41, 50, 83, 84, 95, 110
Wolverine, H.M.S., 98
Wright, Quartermaster, 9, 19, 39
Wyncoll (Sherwood Foresters), 20
Wynter (Artillery Officer), 74

X Beach, Gallipoli, 52, 56, 58–60, 64

Y Beach, Gallipoli, 58–60
Y.M.C.A., 295
Yahudie, 231
" Yilderim Army," 248–250, 258, 267, 290
Young, Col. H. G., 201
Ypres salient, 29

Zeur, 221, 272

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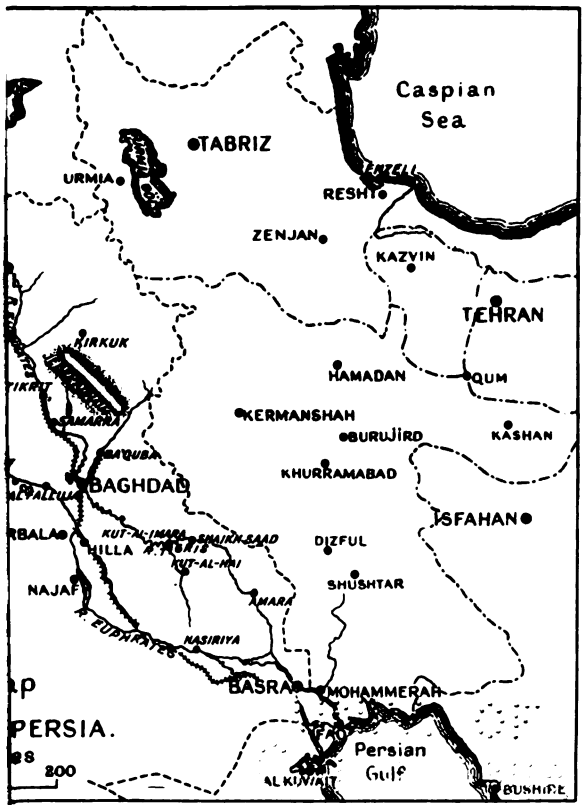

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